

PARENTAL SELECTION OF PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS  
IN AN OPEN ENROLLMENT SYSTEM

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Doctor of Education

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by  
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May 1992

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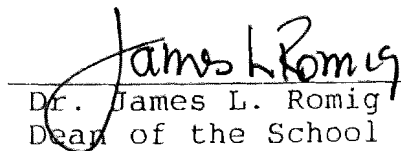
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PARENTAL SELECTION OF PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS  
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An abstract of a dissertation by  
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May 1992  
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The problem. The purposes of this study were to determine the demographic characteristics of parents requesting transfers for their elementary school students, school selection factors which influenced parent school choice decisions, and how long parents considered a transfer before actually requesting one.

Procedure. The population included all elementary school parents in one Midwest school district who requested a school transfer during a seven-month period. Telephone interviews were used to collect the study data.

Findings. Frequencies and percentages were used to summarize, organize, and interpret the data. Findings are reported with parents grouped according to whether child care was a reason for the transfer request and according to whether the transfer was from one district school to another, from a district school to a school in another city, or from a school outside of the district to a district school.

Conclusions. The data suggest parent choices are somewhat segregated by socioeconomic status. The data also suggest that students who have historically been most successful in schools have characteristics similar to those in this study who are leaving the district through open enrollment. Non-district resident parents seeking transfers to a district school reported convenience of the school as the most important reason for requesting a transfer. District resident parents were more likely to report the most important reason was the school's instructional program.

Recommendations. Additional studies are recommended to investigate the long-term effects of open enrollment or school choice on students and

schools. More in-depth research is warranted to more precisely determine why a parent selects one public school over another in a school choice, market-driven school environment.

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## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background

Considerable local and national attention has been directed in the past few years toward issues related to the effectiveness of American education, particularly public education. This attention has resulted in a number of national movements to improve public education by changing school organization and curriculum. A relatively recent movement has been to increase the role parents and students have in determining which public school the student will attend; a movement usually known as open enrollment or school choice.

The movement toward school choice has been stimulated by many factors and conditions, including the following:

1. Members of the American society have a growing expectation for options in all areas of life. Former Colorado Governor Lamm (1986) states that America is a country of choices. John Naisbitt (1982) in Megatrends labeled American society "The Baskin Robbins Society" because of the many choices available; choices in such

varied areas as types of families and colors of telephones. In this context, school choice is simply another option for consumers.

2. There is much support in our society for the concept that increased competition will lead to improved products and services. The assessment that schools and school districts are inadequate has caused some states to systematically promote competition between school districts and between schools in an effort to improve them. A common means of promoting competition is through the distribution of information that community members can use to make comparisons. One state with such an information sharing system is Tennessee. Tennessee has developed a "School Report Card" to enable its residents to compare schools. Other states, including Iowa, are developing similar report cards. A form of a national school report card is expected by the mid 1990s.

3. Parents are seeking an increased role and greater influence in their children's education. A significant, fundamental form of parental involvement would be selecting the school a student would attend.

Historically, students in Iowa, as well as in other states, have had three principal school

attendance choices: the neighborhood public school, a private school, some form of home schooling. Parents who can afford it have also exercised a form of choice in school selection by making decisions about where they live based on their like or dislike of the nearby school. Through the years such major events as school reorganization and school desegregation have not enlarged on the school attendance choices available to students except in the case of magnet schools in some urban school districts. School choice or open enrollment represents a fundamental change in the way in which the school a student attends is determined.

Laws have been enacted in 12 states which allow parents to send their students to public schools in school districts throughout the state. Minnesota, Iowa, Arkansas, Nebraska, and Ohio were the first states with such legislation. In other states, considerable interest is being expressed for expanding the school attendance options available to students. For example, Oregon voters defeated in November 1990 a proposal which would have provided parents of non-public school students and home schooling students a tax credit of up to \$2,500 a year as well as allowed

students to transfer from one public school district to another one (Wornsop, 1991).

The adoption of state open enrollment regulations which give students the option of attending schools outside of their districts may cause school districts to increase student school attendance options within the district. An expansion of school attendance options, including options both inside and outside of the home district, could result in more students electing to attend a non-neighborhood school.

#### Importance of the Study

School choice does not just mean educational options for students and parents. It has the potential of creating substantial change in school governance and structure, on the role of teachers and other school staff, and on future relationships of students, parents, and teachers to each other and to school systems. Supporters of open enrollment believe a result of parents choosing schools for their children will be competition for students. Their assumption is that the competition for students would force schools to improve. Critics of open enrollment plans express the concern that school choice will lead to the



creation of elite schools for some students and second-class schools for others and will result in more racially and economically segregated schools (Wornsop, 1991).

Changing attendance patterns will make it important for those responsible for operating schools to know how parents and students determine which school the student will attend. Those interested in helping parents and students make informed decisions will also need to know how the determination of school choice is made. However, relatively little is known about how parents select schools for their children in a public school system where choice is available (Constabile, 1986; Galluccio-Steele, 1986; Oakley, 1985).

The district selected for this study has provided elementary students with some school choice options for several years. These options have included the following:

1. An open enrollment program which allowed students to attend the school of their choice providing space was available in the requested school, families assumed responsibility for any needed transportation, and the transfer

did not adversely affect the district's desegregation program.

2. As part of the district's desegregation program, minority and non-minority students living in certain areas were permitted to attend selected schools with transportation provided.

The selected district is an appropriate place to study the subject of how elementary school parents select public schools for their children in an open enrollment system for the following reasons:

1. It has a history of providing school attendance choices to families
2. A sizeable number of families elect to exercise school choice options (School Facilities Report, 1990)
3. Beginning with the 91-92 school year, families have the option of requesting not only schools in the selected district but in any school district in the state
4. It is the largest district in the state and, therefore, has potential for widest variety.

School choice analysts rely on theoretical models to predict how families might behave if provided school

choice options for their children (Henig, 1990). This study provides an assessment of how families actually do report the basis for their decisions when granted school choice options.

### Research Questions

Three questions are addressed to determine how elementary parents select schools for their children in an open enrollment system.

1. What are the demographic characteristics of the parents who have sought to exercise specific school choice options?
2. What school selection factors influence parent school choice decisions?
3. For how long do parents consider a transfer before actually requesting one?

### Limitations of the Study

The results of this study are limited in that the study:

1. included only those parents who requested a transfer for an elementary school (K-5) student

2. was restricted to requests for transfers made by parents who either lived in the selected school district or who lived outside of the district and requested a transfer to a school in the district
3. only included those parents who requested a transfer for the 1991-92 school year and whose request was made between July, 1990 and February 15, 1991
4. did not address transfers to schools because of an identified need for specialized special education or English as a Second Language programming. Also, not included in the study were desegregation program transfers for which free transportation would have been provided to the student by the school district
5. results may be biased because a portion of the population was eliminated from the study due to suspect data. This possible limitation is discussed further in Chapter Three.

### Definitions of Terms

Catholic School: This term refers to a school affiliated with and funded by the Catholic Church.

Choice: A term referring to the making of a selection from a set of alternatives.

Elementary School: In this study, the term refers to facilities housing students in grades kindergarten through five.

Factor: A reason contributing to a selection or result.

IN Transfer: This term refers to an open enrollment transfer to a public school in a district other than the one in which the student resides. In this study the transfer would specifically be into the selected district from another district where the student resides; hereinafter referred to as IN.

Magnet School: A school designed to provide a curricular emphasis or theme different from other schools, and often associated with desegregation programs.

Neighborhood School: This term refers to the school to which a student is assigned to attend by a school district; the assignment is based on the

location of the residence of the student's parent or guardian.

Open Enrollment: This term refers to a school enrollment policy which allows parents and students to select the public school the student will attend; usually the student is permitted to attend the selected school if the school has space for the student.

OUT Transfer: This term refers to an open enrollment transfer to a public school in a district other than the one in which the student resides. In this study the transfer would be out of the resident school district of the selected school district to another school district in the same state; hereinafter referred to as OUT.

Parent: This term refers to the adult responsible for the student; either the parent or guardian.

Private School: A school run and supported by private individuals or a corporation rather than by a government or public agency (Morris, 1976).

Public School: A school supported by public funds and offering a free education for all children in the community of certain ages (Morris, 1976).

Requested School: A non-neighborhood public school which the student's parent or guardian asks that the student be allowed to attend.

School Parents: This term refers to those parents or guardians having a child attending a school.

WITHIN Transfer: An open enrollment transfer to a non-neighborhood public school in the same school district; hereinafter referred to as WITHIN.

### Summary

Open enrollment or school choice is a topic receiving considerable national and local attention. It has the potential to be a powerful education reform, to create substantial change in school governance and structure, and to alter the relationships among parents, students, and schools (Clinchy, 1987c). Because of the interest in open enrollment and because of the potential it has to cause change in schools and school systems, it is important to know how the determination of school choice is made. This information is particularly important to those responsible for school operation as well as to those who wish to help parents and students make informed school selection decisions.

A review of the school choice literature is provided in Chapter II.



## Chapter II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Introduction

Allowing parents to choose the public schools their children will attend is a concept currently receiving considerable national attention and high political visibility. The idea of parent choice of schools is seen by some as a "relatively modern concept" (Levin, 1982; Schwartz, 1986) and by others as "not new" (Lewis, 1987).

The concept of elementary school students attending the school in their neighborhood has traditionally received considerable support in the United States. A number of forces are now causing individuals, school districts, and governmental units to view school enrollment in ways which conflict with the traditionally accepted neighborhood school model. The tension which develops from conflict between tradition and change may be universal and will likely cause school choice issues to be widely debated. In this chapter school choice is examined from historical, philosophical, theoretical, political, and educational perspectives.

An historical perspective of education choice provides a context from which current school choice issues can be seen in evolutionary terms.

### Historical Perspective of School Choice

According to Wagoner (1986), the search for an historical perspective is important for the way in which we see and understand how our past affects our interpretation of the present. Identifying an historical perspective, however, is difficult for history probably has many meanings for the present (Wagoner, 1986).

When the United States was colonized, there were no schools as we know them today. Education took place in the home (McCurdy, 1985). The first American schools with instruction by professionals were private ones (Levin, 1982). For those who could afford it, private schools became a visible choice; education at the private school or at home. The idea of public education in the United States may have originated with Thomas Jefferson. His "More General Diffusion of Knowledge Bill" in 1779 sought to establish a system of public schools for those who wanted to voluntarily prepare for American Citizenship (Lewis, 1987).

Throughout most of the history of public schools in the United States, schools have varied in the educational experiences offered students. Schools reflected the influences and political values of the communities they served, influences and values associated with such matters as religion, social class, race, and culture (Levin, 1982). Private differences were permitted in an overall system of publicly supported schools (Levin, 1982; Schwartz, 1986). Gradually, there began a shift from a local perspective on issues to regional and national ones (James, 1983; Levin, 1982). The needs of the total society in a broad sense began to diminish the differences among schools. The private options that had been an integral part of particular communities began to be eroded by state and federal laws (Levin, 1982).

The movement for more uniformity in schools continued. An indication of the interest in uniformity can be seen in Oregon's attempt to compel all students to attend public schools in the early 1920s. However, a 1925 ruling of the Supreme Court in Pierce V. Society of Sisters dealt with the Oregon effort and held that private schools had a constitutionally protected right

to exist as alternatives to public schools (Hirschhoff, 1985).

Government regulations and court rulings focused on the need of the school to serve the broader society. Local schools continued to lose control to replicate community values through the schools. For example, local communities lost much of their ability to control the racial composition of their schools through several legal challenges finally resulting in a 1954 decision by the Supreme Court in Brown V. Board of Education. This decision struck down some state and local laws (Levin, 1982) and held that separate schools for white and black students were inherently unequal and that states must open segregated schools to students of all races (World book encyclopedia, 1988). Civil rights legislation in the 1960s continued the movement to lessen the control local communities had in racial composition.

Beginning in the 1960s the movement to make schools uniform began to visibly shift to providing more school diversity through the expansion of choice parents had related to their children's education (Levin, 1982). There was an expansion of curriculum choices for students partly in the belief that giving

students choices was a way of motivating them to learn (McCurdy, 1985).

The late 1960s saw a movement begin which introduced a way of departing from the uniform, conventional school. Alternative schools were started in response to needs unmet in regular schools (Fantini, 1973). Alternative schools were originally viewed as a new form for all schools, not as an idea of educational diversity and choice. By the 1970s, however, they were seen as an educational diversity for some groups of students and not how all schools should be (Raywid, 1984).

Magnet schools, originally formed to aid in desegregating schools, provided an impetus for growth in choice and stimulated the nation's first widespread attempt to establish school options (Lewis, 1987). The 1976 amendment to the Federal Emergency School Aid Act authorized grants to support magnet schools in districts included in desegregation and provided a tremendous boost to parent choice (Raywid, 1984). Magnet schools, although originally designed to desegregate schools, have gradually shifted to the goal of offering educational options (McCurdy, 1985; Raywid, 1984). Beginning with the 1981-82 school year, more

school districts had magnet schools tied to educational options than to desegregation goals (McCurdy, 1985). Magnet schools are now viewed as a way to increase school quality and gain public support for schools (McCurdy, 1985). They are the most rapidly growing type of family school choice plan in the United States (Murnane, 1984; Raywid, 1984).

Debate on school choice received national prominence and centered in the late 1970s and early 1980s on public aid to non-public schools. President Reagan in 1984 summarized for some a direction of school choice when he said, "Tuition tax credits and vouchers on a national scale represents an idea whose time had indeed come" (McCurdy, 1985).

In 1979 the U.S. Office of Education launched the most widely publicized voucher experiment to date in the Alum Rock School District in San Jose, California, but there has been little practical experience with tuition tax credit and voucher plans by which to judge the impact of such policies (Williams, Hancher, & Hunter, 1983; Zerchykov, 1987). Voucher plans appear to have had minimal effect on expanding parent choice options.

Other districts and states developed option plans not reliant on tax credits or vouchers. For example, parents of elementary students in Cambridge, Massachusetts, were allowed to select the school their children would attend; parents in Des Moines, Iowa, were permitted to enroll their children in schools of their choice providing space for the students was available and the enrollment did not have an adverse effect on racial balance. Minnesota permitted high school juniors and seniors to enroll in classes at institutions of higher education (Lewis, 1987). In 1986, Minnesota enacted a law permitting parents to enroll their children in any public school in the state providing certain conditions were satisfied. Iowa and Arkansas passed similar legislation in 1989.

Today, sentiments about school choice are being voiced from a variety of sources. Some, like former Colorado Governor Lamm (1986), suggest there are too few choices within public school systems and urge more public school choice plans. Currently, for most parents, choices for their children are restricted to three: home schooling, non-public school, or neighborhood public school (Kolderie, 1988). The choice most often exercised is enrollment in the

neighborhood school; the school to which the district assigns the student based on the residence of the parent or guardian. There is considerable evidence, however, that parents, especially those with sufficient financial resources, select a school by paying attention to the perceived quality of the neighborhood school when making housing choices (Reinhard, 1981). For most low-income families, choice of residential location is not a practical means of exercising school choice (Murnane, 1984). In recent years, increasing numbers of parents have also exercised school choice by enrolling their children in private schools and home schooling. Enrollments have been growing faster in private than in public schools during the past two decades.

The movement for increased choice is pervasive and powerful. Twenty-six states have now adopted or are formally considering adopting legislation providing parents with expanded choice relative to which public schools their children could attend (Jennings, 1989).

A variety of forces have placed school choice on the national agenda. These forces include philosophical, theoretical, political, and educational ones (Galluccio-Steele, 1986). Choice debate is not



new. What is different about the current movement in school choice is that it attempts to extend choice to all, not just to the wealthy or to special groups of students (Lewis, 1987; Finn, 1986).

A philosophical perspective is important to the understanding of school choice issues. The roles of the family and state in determining the education of a child is fundamental to much of the school choice debate.

#### Philosophical Perspective of School Choice

Another force which has propelled school choice into national prominence is philosophical in nature. Important to many Americans interested in school choice is the balance of power between the individual or family and the state. What role should the family have and what role should the state have in determining the education of a child is a question underlying a portion of the debate on school choice. As Zerchykov (1987, p. 10) succinctly puts it, ... "Whose kid is it, anyway?"

School choice seems to visibly expose a fundamental tension in a democratic society: the rights and obligations of the individual and the rights

and obligations of the state (Wagoner, 1986). The quest to meet the larger needs of the state through a commonality and uniformity in education are in conflict with the rights most individuals enjoy in their daily lives to satisfy their desires through choice (Levin, 1982).

The educational history of the 19th and 20th century was one of attempted reform to reduce some of the inequalities and inequities that threatened the replication of democracy. A shift from education with primarily individual implications to one with consequences for the total society required a common educational experience that would "provide benefits to society beyond those conferred to individual students" (Levin, 1982 p. 3).

Some propose that the shift of control of schools from individuals and local communities to state and federal bodies through actions by courts and legislatures has succeeded to such an extent that a counter movement resulted; a movement to expand individual rights by increasing the choices parents have relative to the education of their children (Levin, 1982; McCurdy, 1985; Raywid, 1987a).

The need to achieve a balance between the rights of the individual and of the state is a commonly held belief. However, determining what is the proper balance in school choice and how it should be achieved has stirred vigorous debate.

Those expressing a belief in providing parents with the control of the education of a student argue that parents are the primary educators of their children, with schools supplementing that education (Mueller, 1987). Others suggest, as does Fantini (1973), that the final decision-making authority rests with the people. A 1990 Gallop Poll indicates the great majority of Americans support more parent choice in education. Some also suggest that allowing parents to choose schools for their children will provide for necessary philosophical pluralism in American education (McCurdy, 1985).

Philosophical arguments also are used to argue against choice. There are those who express the belief that parent choice of schools will result in home values dominating the schooling of children. They argue that in a pluralistic society students must be exposed to values, ideas, cultures, and perspectives that differ from those in their home (Levin, 1982).

For some, school choice represents too great a shifting of power to parents. According to Zerchykov (1987), school has a value pertaining to the public life of the entire community with consequences for all people, and not just for the private beliefs of certain religions or lifestyles. McCurdy (1985) allows that school choice would result in the promotion of a nation of fragmented communities each with their own beliefs and practices. Those who see too great a shift in power to parents with a school-choice system suggest a common education is necessary to satisfy needs of the total society.

#### Theoretical (Capitalism) Perspective of School Choice

Countless reports from government and private task forces, as well as several major national reports, have highlighted the inadequacies of American public education. Such reports signal a recognition of the importance of education to the country's economic survival (Fantini, 1973). Generally, the reports have focused on the need to establish more rigorous curriculum requirements and many have recommended improving schools by significantly restructuring them.

Some have looked to the capitalistic economic system as a theoretical model upon which to base school reform.

An American understanding of business theory has been that product and service quality will improve with an increase in competition (Levin, 1982; Weber, 1986). Likewise, considerable support is offered to the notion that expanding choices in education will improve American education (Nathan, 1987a; Weber, 1986; Zerchykov, 1987). Others suggest the monopoly position enjoyed by schools has led to inefficient and ineffective education. According to Reitman (1987), Kolderie (1988), and Lamm (1986), competition through choice will eliminate the monopoly position and will improve schools. Weber (1986), Nasstrom (1986), and McCurdy (1985) argue that because schools will be required to compete for students in a competitive marketplace, schools will necessarily make those changes that will allow them to succeed. Raywid (1984) and Levin (1982) concur and suggest the supply and demand model of the competitive marketplace will create tremendous pressures on schools and cause them to become more responsive to students and parents. Bryant (1988), Murnane (1984), and Mueller (1987), say competition will improve schools by causing them to be

preoccupied with how well they are serving their current population. Friedman (1962) and Clinchy (1987b) indicate that schools will become more innovative in a competitive climate, and they will foster the development of a sense of ownership and commitment to the school on the part of students, parents, and employees. Characteristics of a successful school in a competitive marketplace are quite similar to those described for successful businesses by Peters (1987), that is, continued existence would depend on performance. Like private enterprises, public schools which did not improve would presumably lose students and would, therefore, eventually be out of business (Clinchy, 1987b; Raywid, 1987a).

Not everyone views competition for students in a school choice model as bringing about school improvement. Jones (1988) suggests competition will worsen the personality conflicts which plague institutions and undermine cooperation among employees within and among schools, thus diminishing school quality. Parents could lose some of their effectiveness in demanding better programs for their children according to Murnane (1984) since schools

could simply say, "If you don't like the way things are here, go somewhere else." Futrell (1986) expresses concern that schools will feature the flashy things and ignore some of the substance of education in order to attract students. Parents and students being drawn to undemanding schools in order to avoid hassles is also a concern of Murnane (1984). Clinchy (1987a) and McCurdy (1985) identify some of the negatives in private enterprise as deceptive advertising and a desire to control markets and restrict competition and suggest they might also be present in a competitive school environment. Hotelling (1970) suggests that organizations that are similar to each other become more alike than different when placed in competition with each other. They become more similar, he proposes, because each organization will copy the successful organizations over time. Galluccio-Steele (1986) reported that school choice programmatic diversities diminished within the Acton, Massachusetts, School system.

Improvement aside, since Americans experience options in almost all aspects of their lives, Americans will increasingly expect choices both inside and outside of the public sector (Naisbitt, 1982). Unless

public school districts provide more choice, increasing numbers of parents will purchase school options through the private sector if it is not available in the public sector (Doyle & Finn, 1983).

A number of families have had school choices for years; these families were largely the affluent ones. The interests and concerns of some are not necessarily philosophically or theoretically based but rather politically based. Their attention is focused on who will get the choices and what will be the political implications of the choices.

#### Political Perspective of School Choice

In Capitalism and Freedom, Milton Friedman (as cited by Lieberman 1986, p. 215) argues that school choice is desirable as a means of reducing social-political conflict.

Conflict over sex education, prayer in schools, and abortion rights illustrate such conflict. When government provides a service like education, it tends to provide the same service for everyone. Consequently, the only way A can get the kind of education A wants is to force B to have it also; unfortunately, B may be strongly opposed and prefer a kind of education to which A is strongly opposed. Family choice is therefore viewed as a means of reducing social conflict. If parents could afford the kind of education they want for their children, there would be much less incentive for them to impose their educational views on

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others. Such imposition is unavoidable when government monopolizes educational services. For this reason, it is better to have their disagreements resolved through the marketplace instead of the political process.

Those who are interested in preserving public education, and support the political requirement of democracy and equal opportunity that stipulates the quality of education should not depend on family income, express concern with the increasing loss of public school enrollment to private schools, and the growing dissatisfaction with public schools. The number of private schools in the United States has increased substantially in the last 20 years (Raywid, 1984). About half of public school parents, according to a 1988 Gallup Poll, would send their eldest child to a private school if it were tuition free. Raywid (1984) states that much thought needs to be directed in the near future to the issue of public support for education. With fewer than one-third of American households having school-age children, society is not likely to be supportive of schools, especially when parents of children attending schools are dissatisfied with them (Raywid, 1984).

According to Darling-Hammond and Kirby (1985) and Williams et al. (1983), it is in most part the

dissatisfied parents who transfer their children to private schools. School choice among public schools is viewed as a way of easing discontent and dissatisfaction (Fantini, 1973; Frechtling & Frankel, 1982; Hallett, 1986). Choice allows schools to provide for the accommodation of dissenting views and, in so doing, reduce controversy and divisiveness in school systems by providing a particular orientation to meet parent expectations (Bridge & Blackman 1978; Levin, 1982; Lines, 1986). Bridge and Blackman (1978) view school choice as an institutional safety valve for tensions developed by unmet parent expectations for the school. Those who have the greatest options in all other aspects of their lives because of their income, social status, and political resources are the ones most frustrated with the lack of school choice and are potentially the ones likely to be most dissatisfied with their child's school (Levin, 1982).

Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers Union, expressed his understanding of the role school choice can play with dissatisfied parents in this way:

I believe that we in the teacher union movement ought to support the greatest possible choice in terms of schools by parents, students and

teachers. The current system is one designed a long time ago when most people who sent their children to school were not educated. Most of the people in communities looked up at the teachers and principals . . . and they just accepted the authority of the government. People aren't like that now. . . . If students can move from one school to another, and we ought to consider the possibility of having students have the choice in some ways of moving from one district to another within the public system, it very substantially reduces the argument for giving money to parents to send their children to private schools. We could turn to a parent and say: "You've got a huge number of choices here in the public sector; why not take them? (McCurdy, 1985, p. 1)

Increasing numbers of parents are seeking not to just provide input into school decisions but to influence those decisions (Raywid, 1987a; McCurdy, 1985). The right to choose a school represents a fundamental form of power, control, or influence a parent has over the school. According to Nathan (1987b), Reitman (1987), and Lines (1986), parents who choose a school for their children are more satisfied with the school and are also more cooperative and involved with the school.

Not everyone sees the same political advantages of school choice. Futrell (1986, p. 67) suggests that letting parents "choose their child's school will do little if anything to qualitatively enhance parental involvement." Parent involvement may be temporary

according to Hallett (1986). He envisions the role of most parents stopping at the school house door.

Parents, he suggests, would choose a school, then walk away turning full authority for their child's education to the school professionals.

Additional advantages and disadvantages to school choice related to the quality of education and to the social needs of society may be considered in the context of the education profession.

#### Educational Perspective of School Choice

Some researchers and writers offer information and opinions to suggest that allowing students and their parents to choose a school will improve the quality of teaching and increase student achievement.

Raywid (1987b) provides information to support the belief that school choice produces improved teaching. She reports improved teaching results from a combination of phenomena present to a greater degree in schools of choice. These phenomena include: teachers being more involved in instructional issues, teachers feeling more satisfied with their jobs, a greater commitment displayed by teachers for their work, and

more interaction among teachers relative to professional issues.

Raywid (1984) reports student achievement in secondary alternative schools is higher in schools of choice. Finn (1986) and Klauke (1988) suggest that minority and poor students in particular have demonstrated an increase in school achievement when they had chosen the school they attended. Reasons given for increased achievement include: student motivation for school activities is higher than in conventional schools, parents become more involved in their children's education, and students with similar educational aspirations and preferences are clustered in particular schools.

The act of selecting a school provides students and parents with a feeling of control over their educational lives. This sense of control is basic to motivation and achievement according to Fantini (1973). Choosing a school develops an appreciation on the part of students and parents for the contribution student effort and commitment and parent interest make to student achievement (McCurdy, 1985; Murnane, 1984).

Raywid (1984) expresses the belief that the act of choosing a school results in a better attitude about

school. She contributes much of the success many secondary students enjoy in alternative schools of choice to the positive attitudes students have about attending the school. Allowing parents and students to select a school increases parent satisfaction with and involvement in their children's school education (Lamm, 1986; McCurdy, 1985; Raywid, 1984). Increased parent involvement results in increased student achievement reports Nathan (1987a) and Fantini (1973).

Others suggest student achievement increases in a school of choice because there results a better match between learner and school. A search for a single, uniform, one best way to educate all children has been undertaken by many. However, there currently appears to be a substantial majority of American citizens who recognize that students learn in different ways, at different rates, and respond to different kinds of environments (Raywid, 1984; McCurdy, 1985), suggesting that there is no one right way to educate all students.

Today's schools serve students whose interests, aspirations, talents and background vary widely (Clinchy, 1987a; Fantini, 1973; Futrell, 1986). In earlier years, for example in 1900 when 11% of the age group were attending high school, self-selection

limited important factors and resulted in relatively uniform student bodies (Raywid, 1984). Because of the diversity of students, today's schools need to offer many kinds of instructional approaches and environments to be successful. The options which become available to students when they are permitted to choose a school enable students to enroll in a setting which more closely matches their interests and educational needs (Ferguson, 1987; Nathan, 1987c). Others suggest school choice will result in the placement together of certain kinds of students. Hirschhoff (1985) allows that somewhat homogeneous grouping of students will lead to increased student achievement since students' values will be somewhat similar and will, therefore, more likely be reinforced by the school.

Fantini (1973) provides another explanation for increased achievement in schools of choice by suggesting that when students and parents choose the school they are more satisfied with the school. It is, he suggests, the dissatisfied students and parents in the schools which students attend simply because they are assigned there by the school district who disturb the climate in the school for everyone, thus suppressing achievement.

The perceived educational advantages of choice lead some who study urban problems to believe allowing families to choose schools is among the country's greatest hopes for school improvement (Levin, 1982; Raywid, 1987a). However, not all see school choice as the savior of American education. Raywid (1984) reports that choice may actually result in lowering achievement for some students. Students who leave a school may impoverish the school for those remaining by reducing the school's enrollment, thereby making it more likely the school will need to reduce its program options. In addition, by the student choosing to leave, rather than staying and insisting on improvements, it becomes less likely there will be overall school improvement.

Murnane (1984) suggests the students most likely to choose to attend the better schools are those best equipped to make school choice decisions--those most informed, the middle and upper socioeconomic classes. He sees students from low income families as those most likely to make inappropriate school choices. Hawkins (1989) believes student achievement will be diminished by choice. He sees the need for students to increase achievement of basic skills "sidetracked" as schools



offer glamorous frills at the expense of basic instruction in order to attract students.

#### Who Chooses Alternative Enrollment and Why

Data collected in surveys and polls suggest parents support more school choice with low income and minority parents indicating a desire for more choice than other parents (Elam, 1990; Zerchykov, 1987). The growing number of magnet, alternative, and non-public schools testifies to the notion that parents want different kinds of education for their children (Clinchy, 1987a). Gallup poll data indicate that approximately 90% of current parents of school children report they support the concept of expanding school choice and that slightly more than half of all parents with children currently in school favor a voucher plan to provide more school choice (Zerchykov, 1987).

The increasing number of students attending magnet, alternative, and non-public schools would seem to support the assertion that parents have made school choices for their children. However, according to some researchers, most families give little consideration to alternatives to a students' present school. Williams et al. (1983) note that for the vast majority of

families with children attending public schools, "there is little conscious consideration of alternatives to the child's current school" (p. 29). A large proportion of public school parents seem to give little thought to the school their children will attend and simply send them to the nearest public school for convenience reasons according to Darling-Hammond and Kirby (1985), Williams et al. (1983), and Bridge and Blackman (1978). Private school parents are no more discriminating in their selection of a private school than are public school parents (Darling-Hammond & Kirby, 1985; Zerchykov, 1987).

However, Finn (1986) and Raywid (1984) suggest that for years a majority of parents have made conscious decisions about the schools their children will attend. Parents have made these decisions, they say, when they chose where to live. Their like or dislike of the neighborhood school was an important consideration in determining their residential location. In one study, families with school-aged or pre-school children reported the second most important factor affecting their choice of a new residence was the perceived quality of the neighborhood school (Williams et al., 1983).

It is evident that some parents choose schools for their children, either when selecting their residence or by enrolling them in private, magnet, or alternative schools. However, because opportunities for parent choice in a public school system have been limited, relatively little is known about how and why parents would choose schools for their children (Sonnesfield, 1973; White & Company, 1983; Williams et al., 1983). However, Darling-Hammond and Kirby (1985) report there are fairly consistent findings relative to the types of parents who choose private schools over public ones and why they choose them.

Family decisions to enroll their children in private schools are probably similar and also different in some ways from the decisions families make in deciding which public school their child will attend (Murnane, 1984). Parents who actively select a public school have similar reasons for selecting a given school as do private school parents (Oakley, 1985). Much of the information on school choice decisions concerns the selection between private and public schools. Because of the potential for similarities in the selection process of those choosing between a private and public school and those choosing a public

school from among several public schools, it would be useful to know the relationship between certain family characteristics and enrollment in private schools as well as which school quality factors are considered by parents when selecting a private rather than a public school.

Most data, such as data on race, income, and parent education, describing private school families, were not collected prior to 1978 (Catterall, 1983). Studies on private schools in recent years were spurred by concerns about the effectiveness of schools and by questions about the possible effects on enrollments of tuition tax credits and voucher plans. Darling-Hammond and Kirby (1985), Finn (1986), and Krausher (1972), report parents with higher incomes are more likely to choose private schools for their children. Williams et al. (1983, p. 31) report that "financial considerations are a major reason preventing public school parents from enrolling their children in private schools." Parents with higher education levels (Krausher, 1972) and parents who attended a private school themselves are also more likely to select a private school for their children (Darling-Hammond & Kirby, 1985; Zerchykov, 1987).

Williams et al. (1983) report that "different types of private schools tend to be chosen for different reasons suggesting that each type has a separate and distinct constituency." Zerchykov (1987) advises that upper income whites favor either child-centered developmental programs or highly competitive school environments whereas lower income white parents and Black and Hispanic parents favor back-to-basics type programs. The findings of a study conducted by Kamin and Erickson (1981) suggested parents had different reasons for enrolling their children in four types of schools. The types of schools and the primary reasons for selecting the school type were:

1. Catholic
    - a. religion and spirituality
    - b. discipline
    - c. academic
  2. Non-Catholic Religiously Affiliated
    - a. religion and spirituality
    - b. discipline
    - c. academic
  3. Independent Private
    - a. strict discipline
    - b. academic
  4. Public
    - a. convenience
    - b. could not control
    - c. academic
-

Tomenendal (1983) reported Christian School parents enrolled their children in Christian Schools because of a desire for a Christian education and dissatisfaction with public schools. O'Brien and Zewe (1981) found in a study of elementary and secondary Catholic Schools in eight major U.S. cities that parents who chose the Catholic Schools wanted the following:

1. a quality education
2. religious and moral values
3. good discipline
4. teachers who care about students

Non-public school enrollment has increased in recent years according to Constabile (1986) because of dissatisfaction with public schools. Williams et al. (1983) and McCurdy (1985) report the most important reason given by parents for transferring their children from public schools to private schools is their dissatisfaction with the public schools. However, Maddus (1985, p. 6) reports there is "relatively weak evidence of dissatisfaction with public schools" by parents of children enrolling in private schools. Mothers are more involved than fathers in school choice decisions (Bridge & Blackman, 1978; Cogan, 1979; Uchitelle, 1977). Constabile (1986) reports the

family members most involved in selecting a Catholic High School are the mother and student.

A relatively small number of studies have been concerned with how families choose a public school and most of these studies focus on selection of a secondary school.

Public school parents report convenience or distance to school as the predominate factor influencing their choice of schools for their children according to Darling-Hammond and Kirby (1985), Williams et al. (1983), and Jones (1987). Maddus (1985) reports that in the Alum Rock voucher experiment, geographical location of the school was the most important factor in parents' placement decisions even when schools provided free transportation to students attending non-neighborhood schools. Darling-Hammond and Kirby (1985) in their study of the effects of tuition tax credits on school enrollment concluded that location is the "most important single variable affecting choice among public school alternatives" (p. 57).

Williams et al. (1983) suggest that school discipline and the quality of the school staff are very important factors to parents when making a school selection. Scott (1983) studied the reasons for

enrollment in public and non-public schools in an upper middle class New Jersey suburb and found that both public and private school parents were interested in providing a homogeneous social grouping for their children. Of the public school parents who make enrollment decisions based on school programs, parents are more likely to consider the distinctiveness of the schools' curriculum or theme according to Zerchykov (1987). In a review of an ethnographic study of three magnet middle schools, Zerchykov (1987) reports the factors which were more influential to enrollment than the magnet theme were: reputation of the school; parents' interest in enrolling their children in schools with high achieving, upper socioeconomic status students; and closeness to home. Raywid (1984) and Uchitelle (1977) report an important criterion for selection to be school climate, defined as academic standards and courses offered.

The better educated and higher income parents are more likely to enroll their children in private schools and exercise choice in public schools (Clinchy, 1987a; Darling-Hammond & Kirby, 1985; Krausher 1972). However, a federally funded voucher experiment in the Alum Rock School District in San Jose, California,



found that low-income Blacks, after being provided information about school choice options, were more likely to request their children be transferred to another school than were other parents (Zerchykov, 1987). Bridge and Blackman (1978) report that in the Alum Rock experiment non-instructional factors were more important in selecting school programs than were curriculum factors.

Bridge and Blackman (1978) report parents choose school programs to reinforce their values. They report well-educated parents enroll their children in less structured programs which stress independence and social relationships, whereas children of less-educated parents are enrolled in structured programs stressing the academic basics. Raywid in her studies of enrollment in public alternative schools suggests that school choice "brings together those with similar educational preferences" (1984, p. 73). Her study supports other suggestions that schools are selected based on a commonality of values.

#### Summary

School choice opportunities in public school systems have been increasing in recent years and could

potentially increase dramatically in the years immediately ahead following the enactment of state laws increasing school options through open enrollment plans. Parent behavior regarding selecting a non-public school has been studied, but relatively little is known about elementary school parent behavior as it relates to the selection for their children of one public school over another in an open enrollment system. Parent selection behavior will have policy implications for districts introducing choice opportunities. This document reports how elementary parents in one urban school district selected a public elementary school for their children in an open enrollment system. Details of the methodology for conducting the study follow in Chapter III.

### Chapter III

#### RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter is divided into six sections: research methodology, setting of the study, population of the study, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis.

##### Research Methodology

This exploratory study focused on parental selection of public elementary schools in an open enrollment system. Survey research was used to identify answers to the following:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of the parents who have sought to exercise a specific school choice option? (WITHIN, OUT, or IN)
2. What factors influence parent school choice decisions?
3. For how long do parents consider a transfer before actually requesting one?

##### Setting of the Study

The setting of this study is a midwestern city. It is the capitol and largest city in the state. It

is located in the center of the state and has a population of approximately 200,000.

The selected urban school district is the largest school district in the state with a 1990-91 school year K-12 enrollment of approximately 30,000. The student body is racially and economically diverse. In the 1990-91 school year, approximately 18% of the elementary students were identified as minority and approximately 37% qualified under the Federal School Lunch Program for free or reduced price school meals.

Elementary schools in the selected district have attendance boundaries. Prior to 1974 students were expected to attend the school that was identified by the district to serve their residence. In 1974 the selected school district adopted an open enrollment transfer policy. The policy allowed parents to enroll their children in a school of their choice providing the school had space for additional students, and the parents provided any needed transportation.

As part of a desegregation effort, innovative magnet schools were established and voluntary transfer schools were identified in 1976 in response to charges that some district elementary schools were racially segregated. Magnet schools and voluntary transfer

schools were designed to encourage the voluntary desegregation of the schools. The desegregation program expanded on the open enrollment policy by providing transportation to identified schools for students living in selected school areas. Following the enactment of a desegregation program, the district added the stipulation that an open enrollment transfer could not have an adverse effect on the desegregation program. Approximately 50 elementary students applied for open enrollment transfers in 1974, the first year of the transfer program. Nearly 600 transfer requests were received by the district for the 1990-91 school year.

It is the general belief of district office administrators responsible for transfer programs in the selected urban school that much of the transfer request increase is due to the growing need of families to arrange for child care, with the requested school being the convenient one for the child care provider (School Facilities Report, 1990). However, previous research suggests that convenience may be only one of several factors considered by parents when deciding to transfer their children from private to public or public to private schools. Murnane (1984) and Oakley (1985)

suggest the parent reasons for selecting a given school may be similar regardless if the school is a public or private one. Knowing why parents select a particular school for their child is important to those responsible for operating schools and to those interested in assisting parents with school choice decisions.

#### Population of Study

The population of the study is the elementary school parents who requested between July 1, 1990, and February 15, 1991, an open enrollment transfer for the 1991-92 school year.

July 1, 1990, was the first date open enrollment transfer requests were accepted by the selected school district for the 1991-92 school year. Parents were encouraged to apply for a transfer for the 1991-92 school year by February 15, 1991. However, transfer requests were accepted after February 15. Two hundred forty-eight elementary school transfer requests representing 226 families were received between July 1, 1990, and February 15, 1991. Of the 226 families requesting transfers, 39 were for transfers into the selected district by residents living in other school

districts. One hundred eighty-seven requests were made by the selected district residents; 56 requested a transfer to a different school district, and 131 requested a transfer to a different district school. Because of the exploratory nature of this study and the lack of baseline data to serve as a guide for determining a representative sampling procedure, all 226 requests are a part of this study.

#### Instrumentation

Questionnaires and interviews are the primary data gathering instruments in descriptive research according to Borg and Gall (1983). Lavrakas (1987) states that telephone surveying "has achieved a respected status as a valid means of gathering information to aid effective decision making in both public and private sectors" (p. 10). For this study a telephone survey was used to collect information on how parents in and near the selected school district report selection of a public elementary school for their children through open enrollment. The survey instrument was constructed to take into consideration school choice research which suggests that family demographics, previous school

decisions, and parent attitudes about schools may affect school choice decisions (Williams et al., 1983).

Several individuals knowledgeable about school choice options available in the selected district were asked to examine a preliminary version of the survey to assess its content validity. Suggestions made by these individuals resulted in the researcher rewriting five questions to improve question clarity.

The second draft of the survey was field tested with five parents who had requested transfers for their elementary school children. Participants in the field test were timed as they completed the survey so an approximate completion time could be provided to those participating in the actual study. Information collected during the field test was used to make the final revisions to the study survey. These revisions included adding an explanation to clarify the difference between a neighborhood and requested school and rewording one question to make it more easily understood. Data from families participating in the field test were not included in the actual study.



### Data Collection

Data for this study were collected through use of a telephone survey. A telephone survey was chosen as the data collection method after consideration of the advantages and limitations of several data collection methods including personal interviews and written questionnaires. Survey considerations of particular concern to the researcher were: response rates, data quality, costs involved, and time required to collect the data.

In general, telephone surveys have been found to have a higher response rate than written questionnaires but about a 5% lower rate than face-to-face interviews (Groves & Kahn, 1979). However, in urban settings telephone response rates have been slightly higher than face to face interviews (Frey, 1989).

Telephone surveys provide a distinct opportunity for quality control (Lavrakas, 1987). Training was provided the telephone interviewers to standardize the questioning and recording of data.

Telephone surveys are generally less costly than face to face interviews but more costly than written questionnaires (Frey, 1989). The time required to collect data through a telephone survey is less than

with face to face interviews and usually less than with a written survey, depending on the amount of follow-up needed with non-respondents (Frey, 1989).

The telephone survey was selected as the means for data collection because of the likelihood of a good response rate, opportunities for maintaining data quality, the expected moderate cost, and the relatively short amount of time required to collect the data.

A criticism of telephone surveys has been that those without telephones are automatically excluded. This is a limitation which should be noted; however, it is not the problem today it may once have been. Over 96% of all American households now have telephones (Frey, 1989). In the study population of 226 households, all but one listed a telephone number on the transfer request form.

A letter was mailed to parents to be surveyed approximately one week before they were called (Appendix A). This letter briefly explained the study and stressed the importance of their participation. Pre-survey letters have been found to improve response rates and data quality (Frey, 1989).

In consideration of a suggestion offered by Frey (1989) relative to conducting telephone surveys, survey

questions were grouped by topic in order to facilitate administration of the survey by the interviewer and understanding by the respondent (Appendix A).

Transition statements were used to give the interviewee a feeling the survey was moving along and to assist them in shifting attention to a new topic by signaling that a change in topic was taking place.

It is more likely that rapport with the interviewee will be established at the end of the interview than at any other time (Frey, 1989). Therefore, demographic information was collected at the end of the interview since resistance to answering these questions was more likely to be overcome once rapport with the interviewee was established. The survey instrument is shown in Appendix A.

The interviewee was the parent or guardian who signed the transfer request form. It was assumed that the parent who completed and signed the transfer request form was taking at least as active a role in the school choice decision making as a parent not signing the form. The pre-survey letter was addressed to the parent who signed the form since mail addressed to a specific individual should receive more attention

than one generically addressed. The pre-survey letter is shown in Appendix A.

Five interviewers were employed and trained to conduct the interviews. To promote quality control, each interviewer practiced two interviews with the researcher acting as a parent and then was observed during completion of the first two interviews.

Training session topics are shown in Appendix A.

To verify that the returned interviews were completed by the population parents, the researcher contacted the respondents of the 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th completed interviews for each interviewer. For four of the five interviewers, selected parents verified they had answered questions asked of them by a telephone interviewer relative to requesting a school transfer for their children.

All completed interviews by one interviewer could not be verified. That interviewer returned 31 completed interviews. Efforts were made to contact the parents who had provided information for the 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th interviews. Three were reached and all reported receiving a letter explaining the study and indicating someone would call to ask them questions. Two parents reported being interviewed; one stated she

had not been interviewed. Since one of the three parents reached was unable to provide verification, the 6th, 12th, and 18th parents were also contacted. All three were reached and all reported receiving a letter explaining the study. One reported she was interviewed, another indicated she was not certain and explained she had recently been interviewed by telephone a number of times and could not specifically recall answering questions pertaining to a request for a school transfer. The third parent stated she had not been contacted. Because the interviews by the one interviewer could not be verified and were, therefore, considered suspect, all interview reports submitted by the fifth interviewer were discarded to prevent contamination of the study with faulty data.

#### Data Analysis

Descriptive procedures were used to analyze the data since the total population was studied. Frequency and percentage distributions were used to summarize, organize, and interpret the data. Descriptive survey research is concerned with accurately describing current conditions (Oakley, 1985). Descriptive research "has been used mainly . . . to find out what

exists and how it exists in the social environment of a group, a geographical or political area, or even a whole country" (Kerlinger, 1979, p. 151). Kerlinger (1979, p. 151) also reports that descriptive studies provide surprisingly "accurate information on whole populations of people using relatively small samples" and that results have usually been generalizable.

The research questions answered from the demographic and school selection data are the following:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of the parents who have sought to exercise a specific school choice option? (WITHIN, OUT, or IN)
2. What factors influence parent school choice decisions?
3. For how long do parents consider a transfer before actually requesting one?

Data collected during the telephone interviews were recorded on the survey instruments by the interviewers. Data were placed on a Coding Form and then entered into a computer. The SPSS software was used to perform the analysis. Analysis of the data and findings are presented in Chapter IV.

## Chapter IV

### ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

#### Introduction

A description of the analysis of the data and the findings of the study are presented in this chapter.

The purpose of this study was to determine how elementary school parents select schools for their children under in open enrollment system. The research questions for this study focused on the demographic characteristics of elementary school parents who sought to exercise one of three school choice options, the reasons for their choice of school, and for how long they considered asking for a transfer before actually requesting one.

The population was 226 families. Five families participated in the field test to determine the utility of the survey and were not included in the actual study. Therefore, the actual study involved 221 families. Attempts were made to complete telephone interviews with the 221 families. Interviews not completed were the following:

1. One family did not have a telephone
2. Three families chose not to participate

3. One family terminated the interview prior to completion
4. Eighteen families did not answer their telephones or did not respond to messages left on their answering machines or had moved and had not left a telephone number where they could be reached.

Four attempts, each on a different day, were made to reach each parent for an interview. The interviewer was instructed to discontinue efforts to reach the parent and to mark Unable to Contact on the interview form after four unsuccessful attempts.

Interviews were completed with the remaining 198 families. However, 31 completed interviews were discarded because of concerns with the quality of the data reported. Therefore, the data reported in this study were provided by 167 families or 76% of the total population.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The sections are:

1. Analysis of Demographic Data
2. Analysis of School Selection Data
3. Analysis of Length of Time Data



### Analysis of Demographic Data

Demographic data consisted of eleven variables. The research question to be answered from the demographic data is:

What are the demographic characteristics of the elementary school parents who have sought to exercise specific school choice options?

The interview questions which generated demographic data are shown in Appendix A. The analysis of demographic data collected for all 11 demographic variables consisted of frequency and percentage distributions. A discussion of each variable follows. An abbreviated description of the variable is given after the item number.

#### Demographic Item One--Grade of Student

The first question in the interview identified the grade level of the students for whom school transfers were requested. If a parent had requested a transfer for more than one student, they were asked to respond to the questions for only their older or oldest elementary school student for whom they requested a transfer. Approximately one-half of all parents and of parents in each of the three transfer groups had

children entering kindergarten. Somewhat more than one-half of the students transferring into the district were kindergarten and somewhat less than one-half of those students transferring out of the selected district were kindergarten students. The percentage of students transferring declined with each advancing grade level except for WITHIN and OUT transfers at grade four and with IN transfers at grade five. The distribution of students by grade level varied by transfer type as shown in Figure 1. The percentage and number of students at each grade level and for each of the three transfer types, WITHIN district, OUT of district, and IN to district, are shown in Table 1.

Figure 1. Distribution of students by grade level and transfer type.

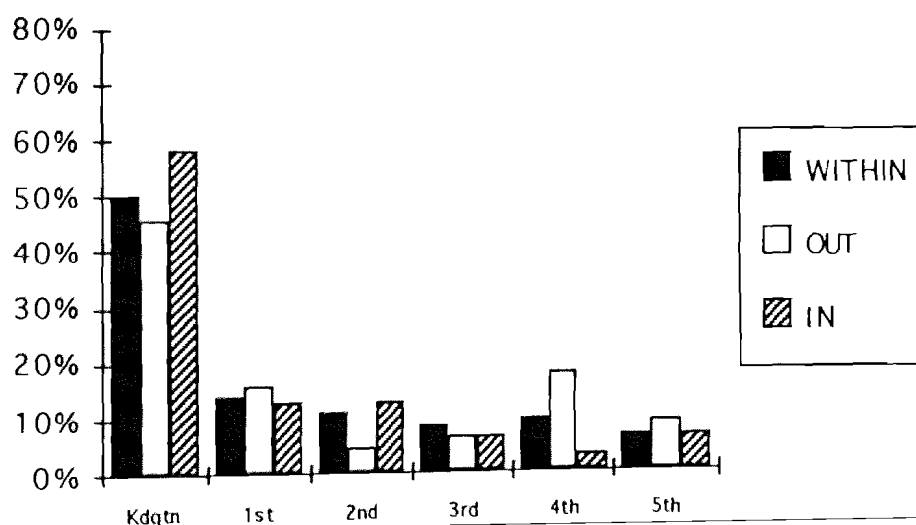


Table 1

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Students by  
Grade Level

Grade		WITHIN	OUT	IN	Totals
Kdgtn.	Number	46	20	18	84
	Row Pct.	54.8%	23.8%	21.4%	50.3%
	Col. Pct.	50.0%	45.5%	58.1%	
1st	Number	13	7	4	24
	Row Pct.	54.2%	29.2%	16.7%	14.4%
	Col. Pct.	14.1%	15.9%	12.9%	
2nd	Number	10	2	4	16
	Row Pct.	62.5%	12.5%	25.0%	9.6%
	Col. Pct.	10.9%	4.9%	12.9%	
3rd	Number	8	3	2	13
	Row Pct.	61.5%	23.1%	15.4%	7.8%
	Col. Pct.	8.7%	6.8%	6.5%	
4th	Number	9	8	1	18
	Row Pct.	50.0%	44.4%	5.6%	10.8%
	Col. Pct.	9.8%	18.2%	3.2%	
5th	Number	6	4	2	12
	Row Pct.	50.0%	33.3%	16.7%	7.2%
	Col. Pct.	6.5%	9.1%	6.5%	
Totals		92	44	31	167
		55.1%	26.3%	18.6%	100.0%

Demographic Item Two--Who Thought of Transfer

Who first thought of the idea of a transfer for your child? This question was designed to identify the individuals responsible for initiating the exploration of transferring a student to a school outside of his/her neighborhood.

A high percentage (70%) of respondents reported the mother as the first to think about a transfer. This was not an unexpected response and was consistent with research conducted by Bridge and Blackman (1978), Uchitelle (1977), and Cogan (1979).

Although the mother was reported as the individual most likely to have first considered a transfer for a student in each of the three transfer groups, there were differences among the three groups with respect to how likely the mother was to have been the first to consider the transfer. For 72% of the WITHIN transfer students, the mother was reported as the first to consider the transfer, whereas the percentage was 55 in the OUT and 84 in the IN transfer groups. In only one group was the first to consider reported as both the mother and father and that was the OUT transfer group with 27% of the respondents naming both parents. The OUT group also had the highest percentage (14%) of

fathers reported as being the first to consider the transfer. An explanation to account for the fathers' involvement from the OUT transfer group was not available.

It was reported one or both parents were the first to consider a transfer for 96% of the OUT transfer students, for 87% of the IN transfer students, and for 82% of the WITHIN transfer students.

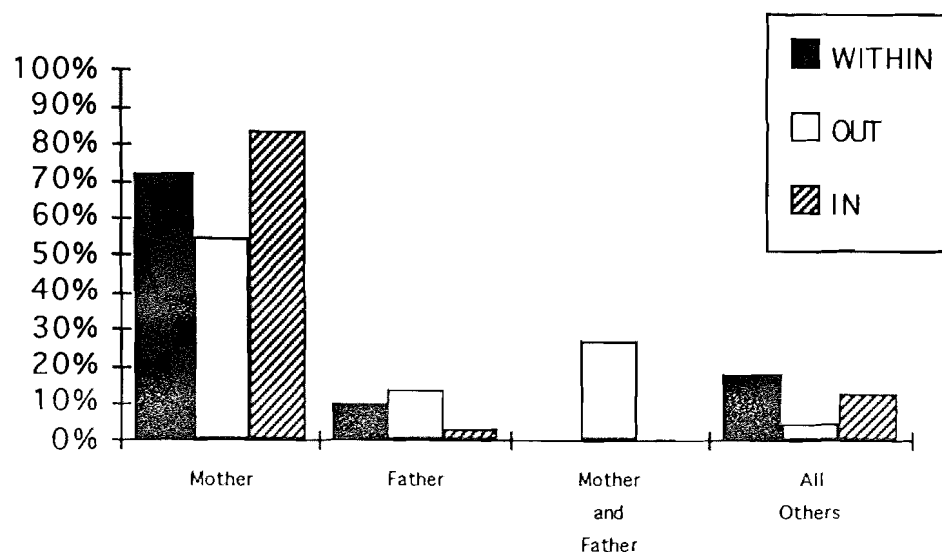
The individual first to consider a transfer was reported as "other" for 9% of the students from the WITHIN group. Possibly the "other" are child care providers. However, all but two of the IN transfers were reported to be associated with child care and "other" was not reported for students in this group. The distribution of those reported to be the first to consider a transfer is shown in Figure 2. Detailed information regarding who first thought of seeking a transfer is shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Those Reported  
to be the First to Consider a Transfer for the Student

First Thought of Transfer		WITHIN	OUT	IN	Totals
Mother	Number	66	24	26	116
	Row Pct.	56.9%	20.7%	22.4%	69.5%
	Col. Pct.	71.7%	54.5%	83.9%	
Father	Number	9	6	1	16
	Row Pct.	56.3%	37.5%	6.3%	9.6%
	Col. Pct.	9.8%	13.6%	3.2%	
Grandparent	Number	3		3	6
	Row Pct.	50.0%		50.0%	3.6%
	Col. Pct.	3.3%		9.7%	
Student	Number	3			3
	Row Pct.	100.0%			1.8%
	Col. Pct.	3.3%			
Another family	Number	2		1	3
	Row Pct.	66.7%		33.3%	1.8%
	Col. Pct.	2.2%		3.2%	
Friend/ neighbor	Number	1			1
	Row Pct.	100.0%			0.6%
	Col. Pct.	1.1%			
Other	Number	8	2		10
	Row Pct.	80.0%	20.0%		6.0%
	Col. Pct.	8.7%	4.5%		
Mother and father	Number		12		12
	Row Pct.		100.0%		7.2%
	Col. Pct.		27.3%		
Totals		92	44	31	167
		55.1%	26.3%	18.6%	100.0%

Figure 2. Distribution of those reported to be the first to consider a transfer by transfer type.



### Demographic Item Three--Child Care

Did you request the transfer because of child care arrangements? This question determined if the transfer was at least in part associated with a need to provide for child care, possibly at a location near a school other than the neighborhood school.

Seventy-one percent, or 119, of all respondents reported their transfer request was associated with child care. Sixty-five percent of the respondents from

the WITHIN transfer group, 68% from the OUT group and 94% from the IN transfer group reported child care arrangements were associated with the transfer request. The distribution of transfer requests associated with child care by transfer type is shown in Figure 3. The breakdown of data for this question is shown in Table 3.

Figure 3. Distribution of transfer requests associated with child care by transfer type.

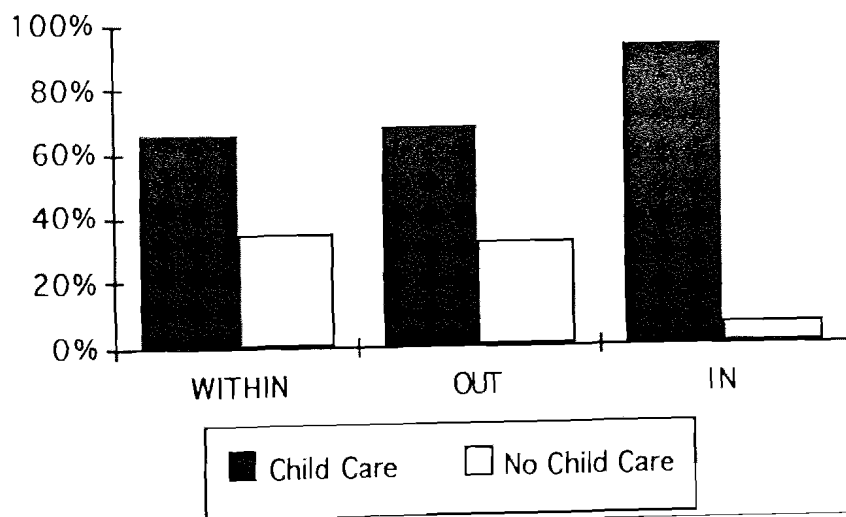




Table 3

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Transfer  
Requests Associated with Child Care

Request Transfer Because of Child Care		WITHIN	OUT	IN	Totals
Yes	Number	60	30	29	119
	Row Pct.	50.4%	25.2%	24.4%	71.3%
	Col. Pct.	65.2%	68.2%	93.5%	
No	Number	32	14	2	48
	Row Pct.	66.7%	29.2%	4.2%	28.7%
	Col. Pct.	34.8%	31.8%	6.5%	
Totals		92	44	31	167
		55.1%	26.3%	18.6%	100%

Demographic Item Four--Convenience to School

Is your neighborhood school or requested school more conveniently located for you? This question provided information on which school, neighborhood or requested, was more conveniently located for the family.

One-half of the respondents from the WITHIN and approximately one-half of the respondents from the OUT transfer groups reported the neighborhood school was more convenient to them. The other one-half named the

requested school as being more convenient. However, 94% of the respondents from the IN transfer group reported the requested school was more convenient. The same percentage from this group reported child care arrangements were associated with their requests. The percentage of those from the WITHIN and the OUT transfer groups who reported the requested school was more convenient for them was about 15 percentage points below that reported as associated with child care arrangements.

The school reported to be more convenient by transfer type is shown in Figure 4. Detailed information collected from this question is shown in Table 4.

Figure 4. School reported to be more convenient by transfer type.

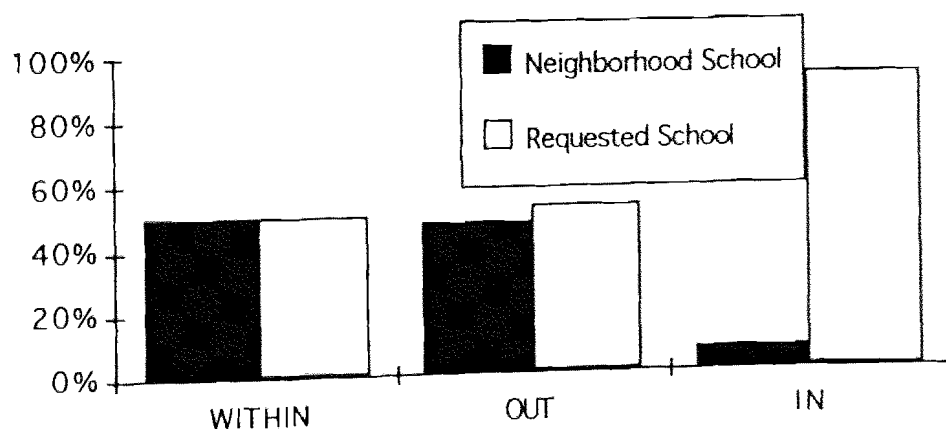


Table 4

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the School  
Reported to be More Convenient

Which is More Con- veniently Located?		WITHIN	OUT	IN	Totals
Neighborhood School	Number	46	21	2	69
	Row Pct.	66.7%	30.4%	2.9%	41.3%
	Col. Pct.	50.0%	47.7%	6.5%	
Requested School	Number	46	23	29	98
	Row Pct.	46.9%	23.5%	29.6%	58.7%
	Col. Pct.	50.0	52.3%	93.5%	
Totals		92	44	31	167
		55.1%	26.3%	18.6%	100%

Demographic Item Five--First Child

Do you have a child that is older than the one for whom you have requested a transfer? This question was designed to determine if the parent was applying for a transfer for the first child in the family and if the school experiences of an older child influenced this particular school transfer request.

One hundred thirty-one, or 78%, of the students for whom transfers were requested were reported to be the oldest or only school child in the family. A

higher percentage of WITHIN and OUT transfer group respondents reported the students they were requesting transfers for were the first or only children in the family than was reported by the IN transfer respondents. Twenty-two percent of the respondents reported having older children in school with about one-half of the respondents from each of the transfer groups indicating the school experiences of an older child influenced their decision to request a school transfer at this time for the younger child.

The percentage of first child in school and those with other siblings by transfer type are shown in Figure 5. The data for this demographic item are shown in Table 5.

Figure 5. Transfer requests for first child and those with older siblings by transfer type.

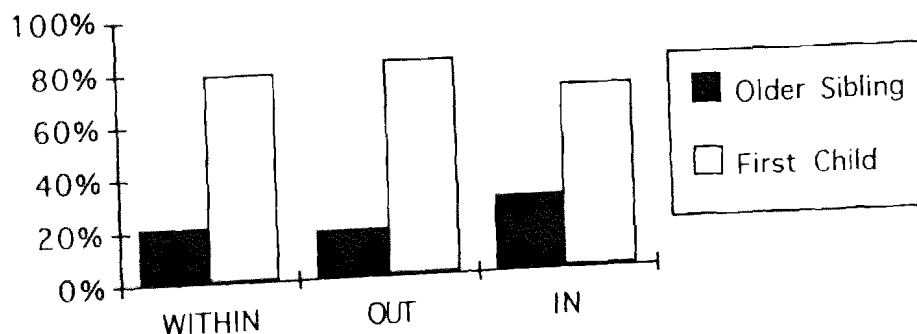


Table 5

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Transfer  
Requests for First Child and Those with Older Siblings

Affect of Older Child in School on Decision?		WITHIN	OUT	IN	Totals
Yes	Number	12	4	3	19
	Row Pct.	63.2%	21.1%	15.8%	11.4%
	Col. Pct.	13.0%	9.1%	9.7%	
No	Number	7	4	6	17
	Row Pct.	41.2%	23.5%	35.3	10.2%
	Col. Pct.	7.6%	9.1%	19.4%	
First child	Number	73	36	22	131
	Row Pct.	55.7%	27.5%	16.8%	78.4%
	Col. Pct.	79.3%	81.8%	71.0%	
Totals		92	44	31	167
		55.1%	26.3%	18.6%	100%

Demographic Item Six--Parent Age

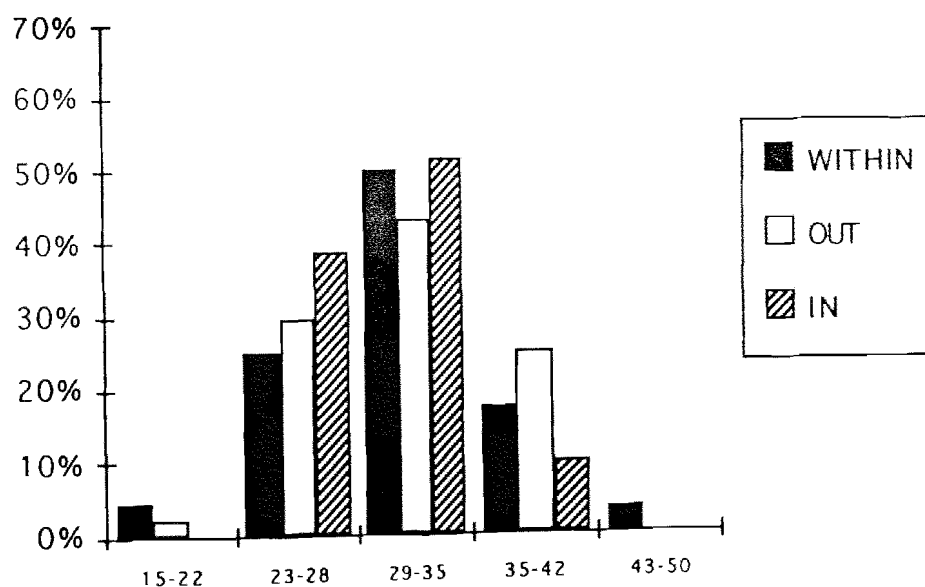
Which of the following age ranges best fits you?  
 This question was designed to determine the age of the  
 parents who requested the transfers.

Only the WITHIN transfer category had parents in  
 all specified age ranges. Parents who requested  
 transfers IN to the selected district were more likely  
 to be younger than those requesting WITHIN or OUT

transfers. Ninety percent of parents requesting IN transfers were 35 years of age or younger, as were 75% of OUT transfer and 79% of WITHIN transfer parents.

The percentage distribution of parent age range is shown in Figure 6. A detailed breakdown of the parent age data is shown in Table 6.

Fig. 6. Age range of parents by transfer type.



#### Demographic Item Seven--Time at Residence

How long have you lived at your present residence?  
The length of time the family had lived in their current residence was measured by this item.

Table 6

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Parent Age

Parent Age		WITHIN	OUT	IN	Totals
15-22	Number	4	1		5
	Row Pct.	80.0%	20.0%		3.0%
	Col. Pct.	4.3%	2.3%		
23-28	Number	23	13	12	48
	Row Pct.	47.9%	27.1%	25.0%	28.7%
	Col. Pct.	25.0%	29.5%	38.7%	
19-35	Number	46	19	16	81
	Row Pct.	56.8%	23.5%	19.8%	48.5%
	Col. Pct.	50.0%	43.2%	51.6%	
36-42	Number	16	11	3	30
	Row Pct.	53.3%	36.7%	10.0%	18.0%
	Col. Pct.	17.4%	25.0%	9.7%	
43-50	Number	3			3
	Row Pct.	100%			1.8%
	Col. Pct.	3.9%			
Totals		92	44	31	167
		55.1%	26.3%	18.6%	100%

Considerable variability between IN transfer respondents and WITHIN and OUT transfer respondents was apparent with this item. Twenty-one percent of all respondents had lived at their residence for less than six months at the time they made their transfer request. However, 61% of respondents requesting IN

transfers had lived at their residences less than six months at the time they made the transfer request whereas only 13% of the WITHIN transfer respondents and 9% of the OUT transfer respondents had lived at their residences a like period of time. Nearly 60% of the WITHIN and OUT transfer respondents reported living in their residences for more than two years; only 10% of the IN transfer respondents reported having lived in their residences for over two years.

The percentage distribution of the length of time respondents reported having lived at their residence is shown in Figure 7. Summary data for this item are shown in Table 7.

Figure 7. Length of time at residence by transfer type.

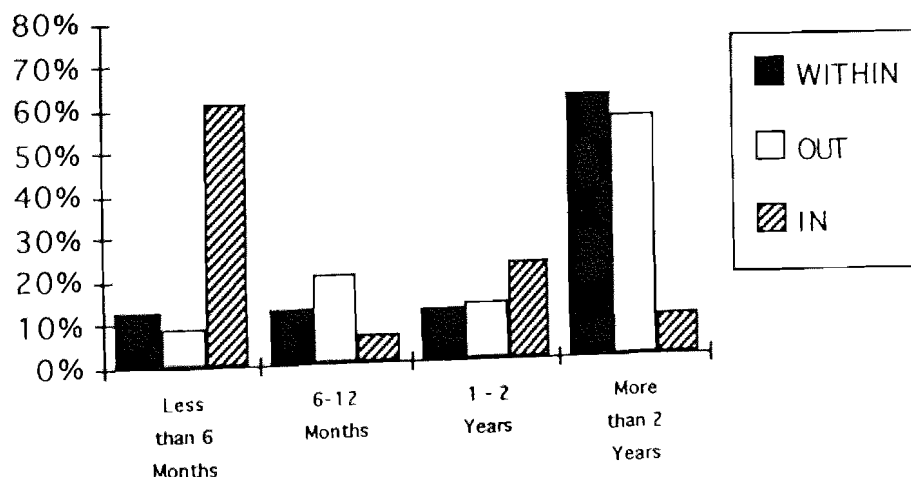




Table 7

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Length of  
Time Respondents Have Lived at Their Residence

Time at Residence		WITHIN	OUT	IN	Totals
Less than 6 months	Number	12	4	19	35
	Row Pct.	34.3%	11.4%	54.3%	21.0%
	Col. Pct.	13.0%	9.1%	61.3%	
6-12 months	Number	12	9	2	23
	Row Pct.	52.2%	39.1%	8.7%	13.8%
	Col. Pct.	13.0%	20.5%	6.5%	
1-2 years	Number	11	6	7	24
	Row Pct.	45.8%	25.0%	29.2%	14.4%
	Col. Pct.	12.0%	13.6%	22/6%	
More than 2 years	Number	57	25	3	85
	Row Pct.	67.1%	29.4%	3.5%	50.9%
	Col. Pct.	62.0%	56.8%	9.7%	
Totals		92	44	31	167
		55.1%	26.3%	18.6%	100%

Demographic Item Eight--Academic Level of Student

What do you believe is the academic level of your child? This question identified the parent's perception of their child's academic achievement level.

When student academic achievement was identified by parent reporting, nearly all students were reported as average or above. However, a much higher percentage

of WITHIN transfer and OUT transfer parents reported their children as being above average than did IN transfer parents. Sixteen percent of IN transfer parents, 41% of WITHIN transfer, and 52% of OUT transfer parents reported their children as being academically above average.

About one-half of the students in grades 1-5 were identified as academically above average. Parent perception of academic achievement level of students in grades 1-5 may partly be based on comments from previous and current teachers and from information on report cards. However, approximately one-half of the kindergarten students, some of whom have presumably not been in a school program where parents were given comparative achievement information by teachers, were also identified by their parents as being academically above average. This is about the same percentage of kindergarten students to all students.

The academic achievement level of students are shown in Figure 8. Summary data for this item are shown in Table 8.

Figure 8. Student reported academic achievement levels by transfer type.

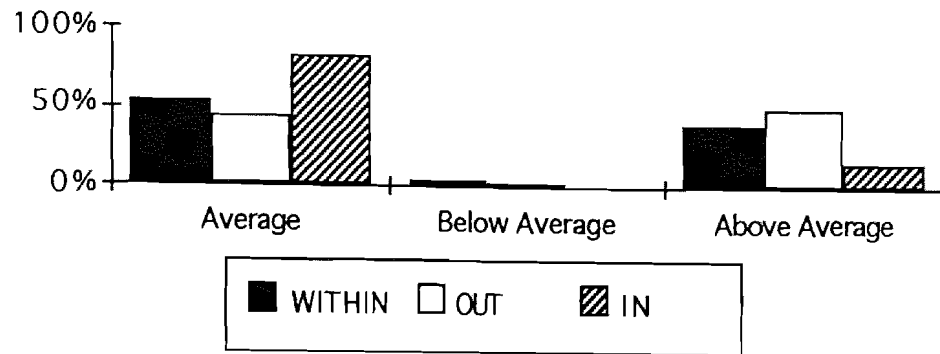


Table 8

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Students  
Reported Academic Achievement Levels

Academic Level of Student		WITHIN	OUT	IN	Totals
Average	Number	50	20	26	96
	Row Pct.	52.1%	20.8%	27.1%	57.5%
	Col. Pct.	54.3%	45.5%	83.9%	
Below average	Number	4	1		5
	Row Pct.	80.0%	20.0%		3.0%
	Col. Pct.	4.3%	2.3%		
Above average	Number	38	23	5	66
	Row Pct.	57.6%	34.8%	7.6%	39.5%
	Col. Pct.	41.3%	52.3%	16.1%	
Totals		92	44	31	167
		55.1%	26.3%	18.6%	100%

Demographic Item Nine--Parent School Attendance

When you attended elementary school, did you attend the public school near your home? This question was asked to determine whether the respondents had attended the public school near their home or either a non-public or non-neighborhood public school when they were an elementary student.

Nearly three-fourths of the respondents in the population had attended the public school in their neighborhood when they were an elementary student.

The IN transfer group parents were more likely than other parents to have attended their public neighborhood school when they were a student. The WITHIN transfer group respondents were less likely to have done so. Thirty-four percent of the WITHIN transfer respondents reported attending a non-neighborhood school. Of the OUT transfer parents, 25% reported attending a non-neighborhood school and 13% of the IN transfer respondents reported attending a non-neighborhood school.

The distribution of parents attending a neighborhood and not attending a neighborhood school is shown in Figure 9. Data related to the school attended by the parents are shown in Table 9.

Figure 9. School attended by parent by transfer type.

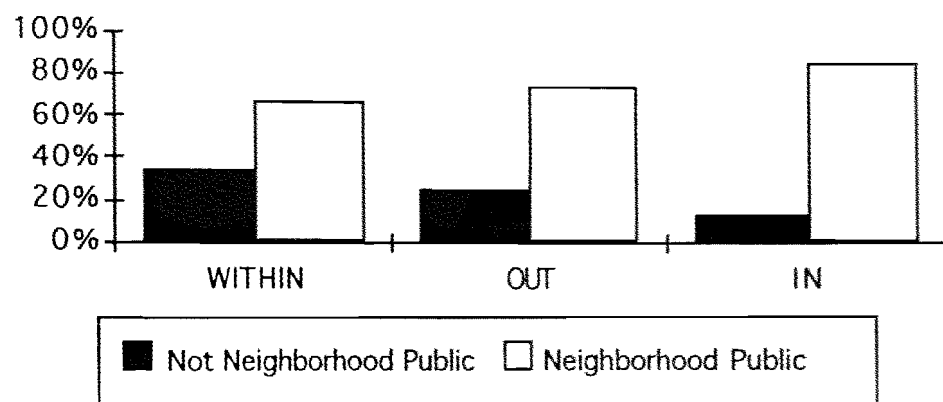


Table 9

Frequency and Percentage of School Attended by Parent

Did Parent Attend Neighborhood School?		WITHIN	OUT	IN	Totals
No	Number	31	11	4	46
	Row Pct.	67.4%	23.9%	8.7%	27.5%
	Col. Pct.	33.7%	25.0%	12.9%	
Yes	Number	61	33	27	121
	Row Pct.	50.4%	27.3%	22.3%	72.5%
	Col. Pct.	4.3%	2.3%		
Totals		92	44	31	167
		55.1%	26.3%	18.6%	100%

### Demographic Item Ten--Parent Education

What was the last grade in school you completed?  
This question was asked to determine the education level of the respondent.

Eighty-eight percent of all respondents had completed high school, with 52% reporting having some post high school education. The OUT transfer group respondents had the most education, IN transfer group respondents had the least. A higher percentage of respondents seeking OUT transfers held a high school degree or more (93%) than did WITHIN respondents (89%) or IN transfer respondents (77%). A higher percentage of OUT transfer group respondents had some education beyond high school (66%) and held college degrees (30%) than did WITHIN transfer respondents (49% and 25%) and IN transfer respondents (42% and 19%).

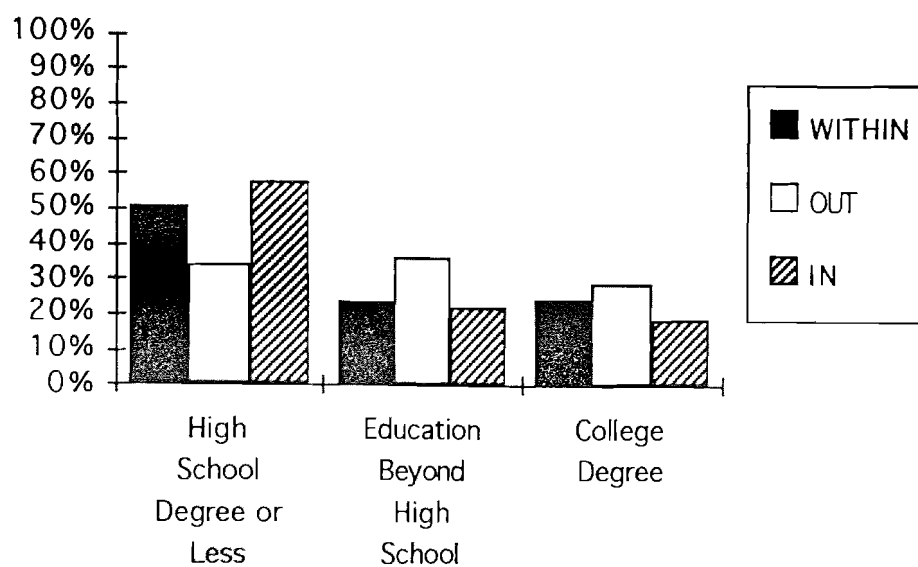
The education levels of the transfer parents are shown in Figure 10. A breakdown of the data relating to the education level of the parent is shown in Table 10.

### Demographic Item Eleven--Family Income

Respondents were asked to stop the interviewer when the income range that most closely represented the

family's total income from all sources for the previous year was read. This item was included to measure the income level of the family.

Figure 10. Parent education levels by transfer type.



Families of students requesting transfers OUT of the selected school district had incomes higher than those requesting transfers from one district school to another or IN to the selected district from a community outside the city. Forty-three percent of the OUT transfer respondents reported incomes exceeding \$40,000, while 26% of the WITHIN transfer respondents and 19% of the IN transfer respondents reported similar incomes. Fifty-five percent of the IN, 49% of the

WITHIN, and 30% of the OUT transfer group respondents reported incomes below \$30,000. Family incomes of less than \$20,000 were reported by one out of four IN transfer respondents, by one out of five WITHIN respondents and by one out of 14 OUT transfer respondents.

Table 10

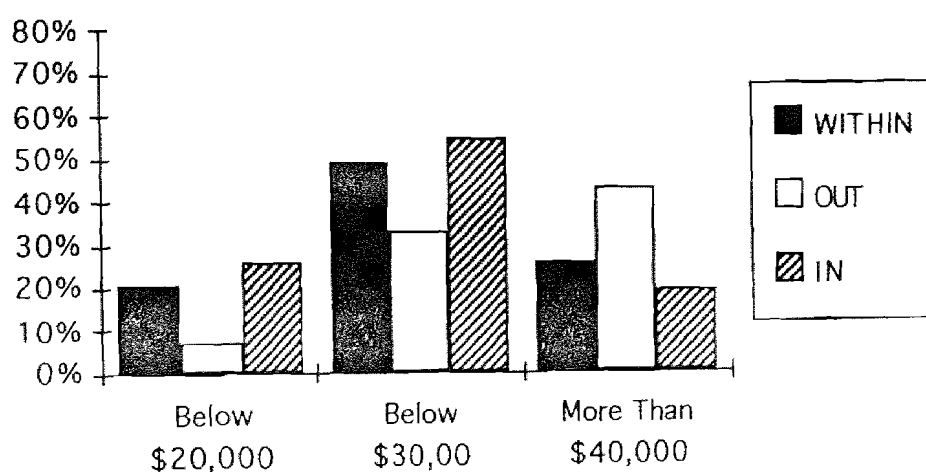
Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Parent Education Levels

Parent Education		WITHIN	OUT	IN	Totals
Less than grade 12	Number	10	3	7	20
	Row Pct.	58.8%	17.6%	41.2%	12.0%
	Col. Pct.	10.8%	6.8%	22.6%	
Grade 12	Number	37	12	11	60
	Row Pct.	61.7%	20.0%	18.3%	35.9%
	Col. Pct.	40.2%	27.3%	35.5%	
Some post high school	Number	22	16	7	45
	Row Pct.	48.9%	35.6%	15.6%	26.9%
	Col. Pct.	23.9%	36.4%	22.6%	
College degree	Number	23	13	6	42
	Row Pct.	54.8%	31.0%	14.3%	25.1%
	Col. Pct.	25.0%	29.5%	19.4%	
Totals		92	44	31	167
		55.1%	26.3%	18.6%	100%



The income of families of transfer students is shown in Figure 11. Detailed data relating to family income is shown in Table 11.

Figure 11. Family income by transfer type.



#### Demographic Summary

The demographic data for the parents who have sought to exercise one of three school choice options were analyzed using frequency and percentage distributions for each of the eleven variables.

Parents requesting to transfer their elementary school children were more likely to have a child in grades kindergarten, first, or second than in grades three, four, or five. Approximately one-half of all

parents requesting transfers had children entering kindergarten.

Table 11

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Family Income

Family Income		WITHIN	OUT	IN	Totals
Less than \$20,000	Number	19	3	8	30
	Row Pct.	63.3%	10.0%	26.6%	18.0%
	Col. Pct.	20.7%	6.8%	25.8%	
Less than \$30,000	Number	49	22	17	88
	Row Pct.	55.7%	25.0%	19.3%	52.7%
	Col. Pct.	53.3%	50.0	54.8%	
Over \$40,000	Number	24	19	6	49
	Row Pct.	49.0%	38.8%	12.2%	29.3%
	Col. Pct.	26.1%	43.2%	19.4%	
Totals		92	44	31	167
		55.1%	26.3%	18.6%	100%

Seventy percent of all respondents identified the student's mother as the first to think about a transfer for the student. The OUT transfer group respondents were the only ones to identify both the mother and father as the first to think about the transfer.

About one-half of WITHIN and OUT transfer respondents reported the requested school was more

convenient to them than the neighborhood school; however, 94% of the IN transfer group respondents reported the requested school was more convenient than the neighborhood school.

The IN transfer group respondents were more likely than other transfer parents to report the transfer request was associated with child care and the requested school was more convenient to them.

Seventy-eight percent of the students for whom transfers were requested were reported to be the only or oldest student in the family. Approximately 30% of the IN transfer respondents reported the student had an older sibling, whereas about 20% of the WITHIN and OUT transfer respondents reported an older sibling.

The IN transfer parents were more likely to be younger than OUT and WITHIN transfer parents.

Considerable variability between parents of different transfer types existed with respect to the length of time the family had lived at their residence at the time of the requested transfer. The WITHIN and OUT transfer group respondents reported living at their residence for a longer period than those seeking IN transfers. Nearly 6 out of 10 parents requesting an IN transfer had lived at their residence less than six

months, whereas only about 1 out of 10 WITHIN and OUT transfer group respondents had lived at their residence for a similar period of time. Furthermore, 6 out of 10 WITHIN and OUT transfer group respondents but only 1 out of 10 IN transfer group respondents reported having lived at their residence for more than two years.

Most parents reported the academic level of their children as average or above average. Fifty-two percent of the students requesting OUT transfers were reported by respondents as academically above average, while 41% of the WITHIN and 16% of the IN transfer respondents reported their students as above average.

Close to three-fourths of the parents reported attending the public school near their home when they attended elementary school. Parents of IN transfer students were the least likely to have attended a non-neighborhood school themselves (13%) and parents of WITHIN transfer students were the most likely to have done so (33%).

Eighty-eight percent of all parents reported completing high school. Parents of OUT of district transfer students reported having the highest level of education, followed by WITHIN transfer parents and then parents of IN transfer students.

Families of students requesting OUT of district transfers had higher incomes than families of students requesting WITHIN or IN transfers. The WITHIN transfer students were from families with incomes higher than students who were seeking IN transfers.

The IN transfer students were more likely than other transfer students to have younger parents, families with lower incomes, parents with less education, parents reporting child care arrangements associated with the transfer, lived at their current residence for a shorter period of time, parents who attended neighborhood public elementary schools themselves, and less likely to be identified by their parents as above average academically. The OUT transfer students were more likely to have the opposite characteristics, except for the school attendance of their parents.

#### School Selection Data Analysis

School selection data consisted of 20 variables. The research question to be answered from the school selection data is: What school selection factors influence parent school choice decisions? The analysis of data collected from the school selection variables

consisted of a breakdown into frequency and percentage distributions. A discussion of each of the variables follows with an abbreviated description of the variable given after the school selection item number.

#### School Selection Item One-Date of Transfer Request

The school selection data for the first item, the date the transfer application was submitted, was examined by frequency and percentage distributions.

For nearly 20 years residents of the selected district have been able to request a transfer from one district school to another district school. This type of transfer was termed a WITHIN transfer. State legislation made it possible, beginning with the 1991-92 school year, for parents to transfer their children from a school in their resident school district to a school in another district of their choice. Transfer applications for 1991-92 for WITHIN, OUT, and IN transfers could be submitted as early as July 1, 1990; nearly 14 months before the start of the school year when the transfer became effective. State transfer guidelines were written to encourage transfer requests between 9 and 14 months prior to attendance in the requested school. Forty-six (28%) of the transfer

requests studied were prepared during this time frame. The remaining transfer requests studied were submitted between 7 and 9 months before attendance.

Fifty-five percent of the transfer requests were WITHIN transfers; 26% were OUT transfers; 19% IN transfers. Those seeking an OUT transfer were more likely to have submitted a transfer request earlier than those seeking WITHIN or IN transfers. Fifty percent of OUT transfer requests were made between 9 and 14 months prior to the effective date of the transfer; 17% of WITHIN and 26% of IN transfers were made during the same time period.

Comparing the length of time a family had lived at their residence at the time of making a transfer, and the date when the transfer was made was revealing. More of the early transfer requests were received from each transfer group from parents who had lived at their residence for less than two years than from those who had lived there more than two years. Eighteen percent of the respondents requesting an OUT transfer 9 to 14 months before the transfer was to take effect had lived at their residences for more than two years. Twelve percent of the WITHIN transfer respondents and 3% of the IN district respondents had lived at their

residence for more than two years. Generally speaking, those who have lived at the same residence for more than two years should be expected to have heard or know more about their neighborhood school than those who have lived in a residence for less than six months.

The IN respondents who reported their children were academically above average were more likely to apply for the transfer 9 to 14 months before the transfers' effective date than were those seeking WITHIN and OUT transfers. Twenty-six percent of those seeking IN transfers applied 9 to 14 months preceding attending, but 60% of those identified as above average were included in this group. The percentage of students identified as academically above average was nearly the same as for all students applying during this time period for WITHIN and OUT transfers.

#### School Selection Item Two--Perceptions of the Neighborhood and Requested Schools

Item two determined which of 16 statements about the neighborhood and requested schools were seen as true or not true by the parent requesting the transfer.

As a total group, those who requested transfers viewed their neighborhood school more positively than their requested school. Respondents reported a more



favorable view of their neighborhood school than their requested school in their responses to 12 of the 16 selection statements. Only one school selection statement, "student test scores are high," received more favorable responses for the requested school than for the neighborhood school. Three statements yielded the same responses for both the neighborhood and requested schools.

Even though the neighborhood school was generally viewed more favorably by all respondents as a total group, there were striking differences in how respondents viewed schools when grouped by transfer type and by whether or not child care was a stated reason for the transfer request.

A high percentage of "don't know" responses was given by parents of kindergarten students to 14 of the 16 statements. Only two statements, "student discipline is good" and "the school's reputation is not particularly good," had "don't know" percentages below 50%.

Parents of students in grades one through five had lower "don't know" response rates. These parents provided "don't know" response rates greater than 50% for both the neighborhood and requested schools for

only two statements. These two statements were: "not enough emphasis is placed on the teaching of the arts" and "there is not enough racial diversity in the student body." The two statements receiving the lowest percentage of "don't know" responses by parents of students in grades 1-5 were the same ones receiving the lowest response rates by the parents of kindergarten students: "student discipline is good" and "the school's reputation is not particularly good."

WITHIN Transfer Group. The 92 WITHIN transfer group respondents favored their neighborhood schools in their responses to 11 of the 16 statements. Responses to 3 statements indicated a more favorable view of their requested schools. Two statements produced the same responses for both the neighborhood and requested schools. However, when the WITHIN group respondents were categorized according to whether or not child care was a stated reason for the transfer request, a very different perception of the neighborhood and requested schools was apparent.

The WITHIN group respondents who stated child care was a factor in their transfer request responded to each of the 16 statements more favorably toward their

neighborhood school than for their requested school. Those for whom child care was not a factor had the opposite view of the schools; each of the 16 statements yielded a more positive response toward the requested school than the neighborhood school.

Each of the 16 statements for the child care group respondents had fewer "don't know" responses for the neighborhood school than for the requested schools, suggesting parents believed they knew more about their neighborhood school than the requested school.

However, those who stated child care was not a factor in the transfer request had fewer "don't know" responses for the requested school than for the neighborhood school, suggesting these parents knew more about the requested school.

Visible percentage differences of favorable responses for neighborhood and requested schools existed for some statements dependent upon the child care factor. These statements are:

1. the teachers are very good
3. not enough emphasis is placed on the teaching of the basics
10. teachers care about students

16. the school's reputation is not particularly good

The WITHIN group respondents without the child care influence presumably requested a transfer based on their like for their requested school and/or dislike of their neighborhood school. Those whose transfer was influenced by child care arrangements expressed knowing more about and viewed their neighborhood school more favorably than the requested school.

The statements receiving a favorable response for the neighborhood or requested school by more than 60% of the WITHIN respondents with child care or without child care were the following:

1. the teachers are very good
7. the teaching of values is neglected
10. teachers care about students
13. students are interested in doing well in school
16. the school's reputation is not particularly good

OUT Transfer Group. Forty-four selected school district residents requested a transfer to a school located outside of their district. As a group these

respondents indicated they had a more favorable view of their neighborhood school in their responses to 4 of the 16 statements, and a more favorable view toward the requested school in 8 of the statements. Responses to 4 statements were the same for both the neighborhood and requested schools. The greatest difference in percentage of favorable responses between neighborhood and requested schools was found with the statement, "parents believe the principal solves problems in the school." Fifty percent said this was true for their requested school; 34% said it was true at their neighborhood school.

Responses vary considerably also with the OUT transfer group respondents depending upon whether or not the need to arrange for child care was a factor in requesting the transfer.

Those who requested OUT transfers and stated child care was a factor in the transfer request rated the requested school more favorably than the neighborhood school when responding to 13 of the 16 statements. The neighborhood school was more favorably viewed in responses to 2 statements. One statement yielded the same percentage of favorable responses for both the neighborhood and requested schools. This response

pattern is quite different from that reported by those from the WITHIN group with child care arrangements where the neighborhood school was seen more favorably in the responses to all 16 statements.

Respondents from the OUT transfer group stating child care arrangements was not a factor in their request for a transfer rated the neighborhood school more favorably for more of the statements than the requested school. Parents from the OUT transfer group without child care arrangements reported more favorable responses for the neighborhood school for nine statements and for the requested school for five statements. Two statements elicited the same percentage of favorable responses for both the neighborhood and requested school.

The OUT group respondents without child care needs expressed a more favorable view toward their requested school in their responses to only 5 of the 16 school selection statements. Presumably those whose transfer requests were not influenced by child care needs would be more likely than those whose transfer was influenced by child care to request a particular school because of their likes for that school and/or dislikes of their neighborhood school. Therefore, the five statements

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which provided the positive view of the requested school for those indicating child care was not a factor in selecting a school, may in part identify the issues that prompted parents to seek to enroll their child in a school out side of their resident school district.

These 5 statements follow.

7. the teaching of values is neglected
9. the school is not always clean
11. the school staff does not usually respond to parent and community concerns
12. parents of students in the school believe the principal will help resolve problems at the school
14. students in this school have many problems

A favorable view of the neighborhood school was most pronounced when OUT respondents without child care responded to the following statements:

4. there is sufficient staff racial diversity in this school
5. there are too many students in a class
6. not enough emphasis is placed on the teaching of the arts
15. there is not enough racial diversity in the student body

Since the above statements elicited a more favorable response toward the neighborhood school, it is unlikely issues related to these statements caused parents to seek a transfer OUT of the district.

The OUT transfer group respondents with child care gave fewer don't know responses for their requested school than to their neighborhood school for 15 of the 16 statements. Such a response suggests these parents believed they knew more about their requested school than their neighborhood school. Only one statement yielded a response indicating more knowledge about the neighborhood school and that was, "the school is not always clean." The percentage of don't know responses by parents from the OUT group not identifying child care as influencing their transfer request were similar for the neighborhood and requested schools.

IN Transfer Group. Thirty-one residents of school districts other than the selected district requested that their children be allowed to enroll in the selected district school. Twenty-nine or 94% of the 31 stated that child care arrangements influenced their decision to request a transfer. Two of the 31 reported child care was not a factor in the transfer request.



Two were determined to be too few to make analysis meaningful. Therefore, the analysis of the responses by IN group respondents was made for the 29 who stated child care influenced their request to seek a transfer.

Responses to 8 of the 16 school selection statements by IN group respondents showed a more favorable view of their neighborhood school than the requested school. Five statements yielded more favorable responses toward the requested school. Three statements provided the same percentage of favorable responses to both the neighborhood and requested schools.

Two statements provided the most favorable view of the neighborhood school. These two statements related to the teaching of values and problem students in the school. The statements which elicited the most positive view of the requested school were related to the quality of teachers and class size.

The descriptive treatment of the 16 neighborhood and requested school selection variables consisted of conversion to frequency and percentage distributions and are found in Appendix B. A description of the findings, item by item, can be found below.

1. The teachers are very good. This statement received from the total population the second highest favorable response rate of all 16 statements for both the neighborhood and requested schools. Also, the fourth lowest "don't know" response rate for both the neighborhood and requested schools was generated by this statement.

Parents requesting WITHIN district transfers and stating child care influenced their decision to seek a transfer reported a 63% favorable response rate for the neighborhood school. Those without child care involvement provided a favorable rating of only 44% to their neighborhood school but 60% to their requested school.

Parents requesting OUT of district transfers without child care involvement provided the highest favorable rate (79%) for both the neighborhood and requested schools. This was the highest favorable percentage rating by any group for any statement. Those who were requesting OUT transfers and had child care arrangements gave a lower favorable percentage response for the neighborhood school (43%) than for the requested school (53%).

Those requesting IN transfers gave responses which favored the requested school.

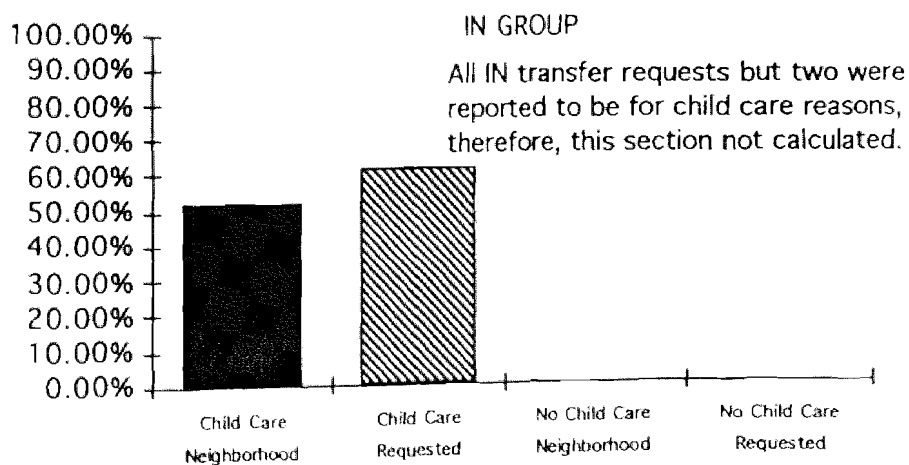
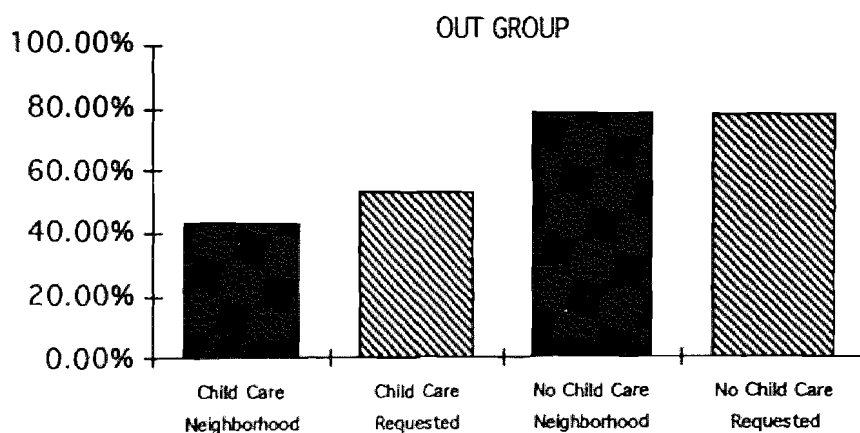
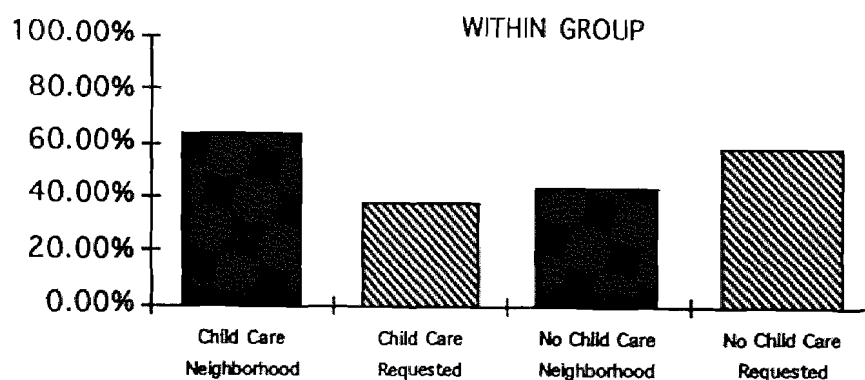
Favorable response rates to "the teachers are very good" by transfer type and with and without child care involvement is shown in Figure 12.

2. Student test scores are high. Over 60% of all respondents stated they did not know if this statement was true or not true for both the neighborhood and requested schools. This statement also provided the greatest percentage difference of true responses between the neighborhood and requested schools by all respondents for any of the 16 selection statements. Thirty-four percent of all respondents stated this was true of the requested school and 26% so said of the neighborhood school.

Parents from the WITHIN group without child care involvement responded to this statement very differently for the two schools as 25% stated it was true for the neighborhood school and 44% stated it was true of the requested school. The responses from those with child care revealed relatively little difference between the neighborhood and requested schools.

The percentage difference of true responses was greatest (21%) with the OUT transfer group without

Figure 12. Favorable response to "Teachers are Very Good" for neighborhood and requested schools by transfer type and child care/no child care.



child care involvement; these parents gave the more favorable rating to their neighborhood school. Those with child care involvement favored the requested school.

The IN transfer group respondents gave a high rate of don't know responses for both the neighborhood (72%) and requested schools (66%).

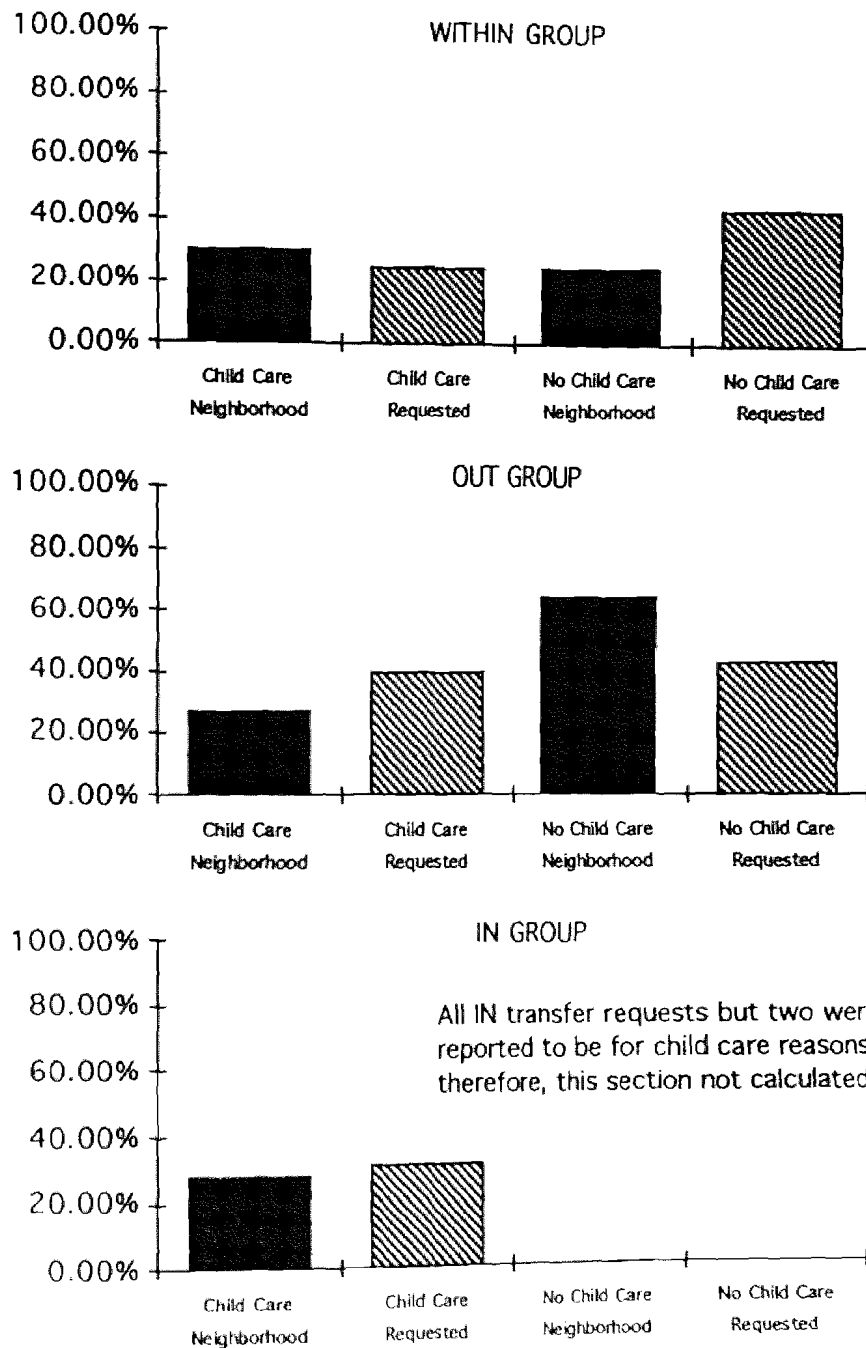
Favorable response rates to "student test scores are high" by transfer type and with and without child care are shown in Figure 13.

3. Not enough emphasis is placed on the basics.

About one-half of all respondents gave a "don't know" response to this statement for both the neighborhood and requested schools. Those seeking OUT transfers without child care involvement provided a much lower don't know response rate than any other group.

The differences in the favorable response rates by parents in the same transfer group for the neighborhood and requested schools were sizeable. Forty-five percent (45%) of the WITHIN transfer respondents with child care involvement did not agree with this statement for their neighborhood school, whereas 27% did not agree with it for their requested school. The opposite pattern was apparent with those from the

Figure 13. Favorable response to "Test Scores are High" for neighborhood and requested schools by transfer type and child care/no child care.



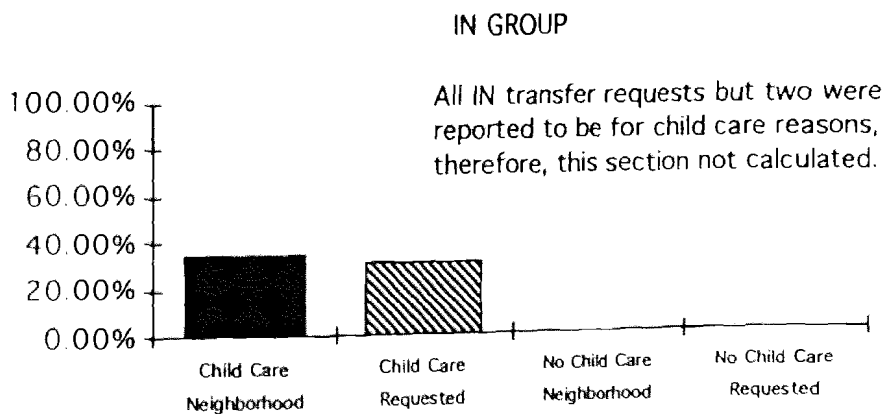
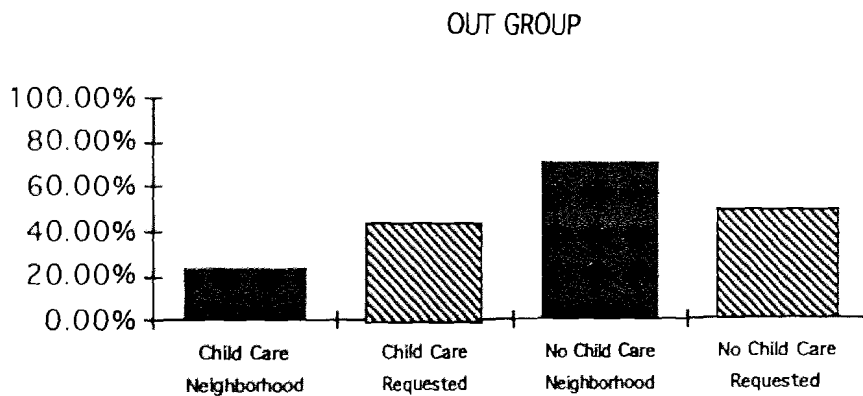
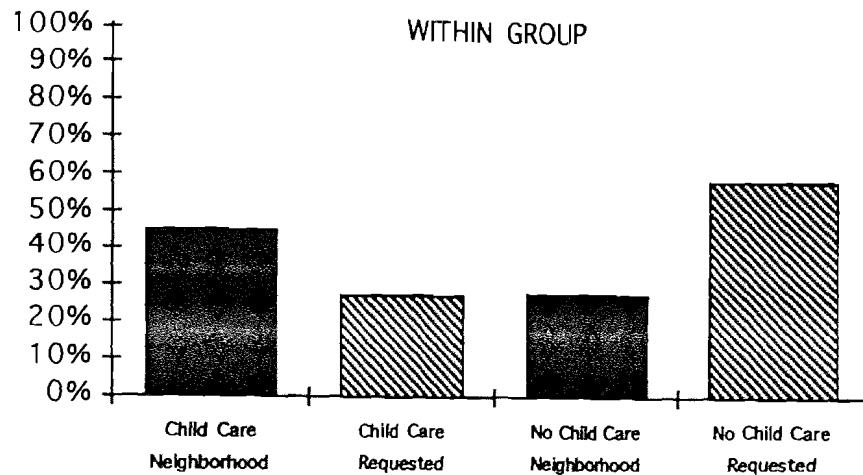
WITHIN group without child care involvement where 28% said it was not true of their neighborhood school and 59% said it was not true of the requested school.

The highest percentage of respondents not agreeing with the statement were those seeking OUT transfers and had child care involvement when referring to their neighborhood school. Seventy-one percent of those seeking OUT transfers and not having child care involvement reported this statement was not true of their neighborhood school; 50% said it was not true of their requested school. The IN group responses were similar for both the requested and neighborhood schools.

The percentage of parents not agreeing with "not enough emphasis is placed on the teaching of the basics" by transfer type and with and without child care is shown in Figure 14.

4. There is sufficient staff racial diversity in this school. Nearly 60% of all respondents replied they did not know if this statement was true or not true. Seventy percent of those seeking OUT transfers with child care involvement reported "don't know" for their neighborhood school and a like percentage for their requested school. However, only 36% of the OUT

Figure 14. Favorable response to "Not Enough Emphasis on Basics" for neighborhood and requested schools by transfer type and child care/no child care.





transfer respondents without child care reported they did not know for their neighborhood school.

The WITHIN transfer group respondents with child care favored their neighborhood school 38% to 28%. However, those without the child care involvement favored their requested school 44% to 25%.

A striking difference in the percentage of true responses for their neighborhood school existed with the OUT transfer group between those with (27%) and without (64%) child care.

It appears staff racial diversity was not an attractor to a school for parents seeking OUT transfers since these respondents rated their neighborhood school more favorably regardless of the child care factor.

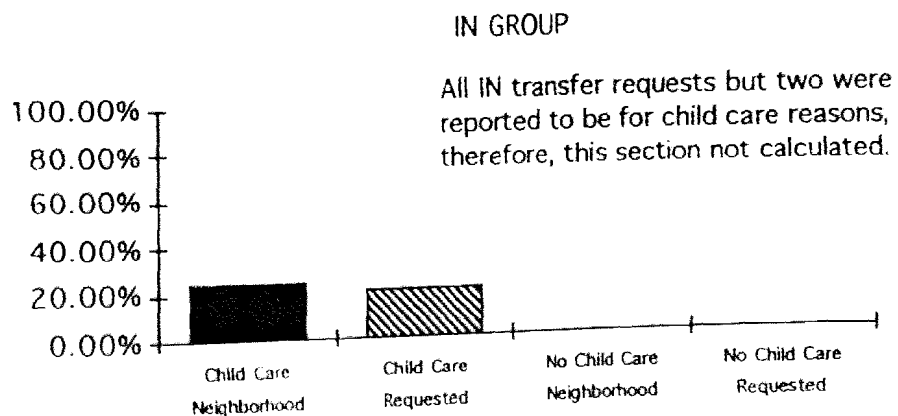
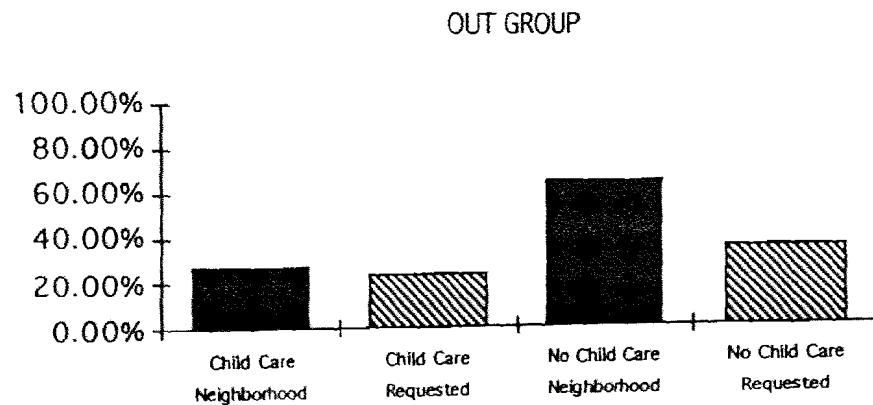
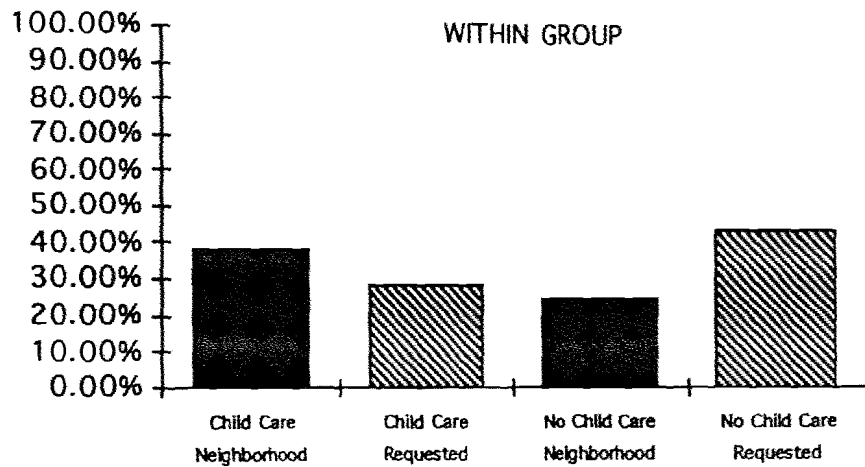
The IN transfer group respondents gave high percentages (76%) of "don't know" responses for both the neighborhood and requested schools.

The percentage of parents agreeing with the statement "there is sufficient staff racial diversity in this school" by transfer type and with and without child care is shown in Figure 15.

5. There are too many students in a class.

Considerable national and local attention has been directed to class size issues in recent years.

Figure 15. Favorable response to "Sufficient Staff Racial Diversity" for neighborhood and requested schools by transfer type and child care/no child care.



Nevertheless, about one-half of all respondents gave a don't know response to this statement for both the neighborhood and requested schools. Parents who gave a true or not true response were more than twice as likely to have said it was not true of both their neighborhood and requested schools than to have said it was true.

More WITHIN transfer respondents with child care involvement believed this statement to be not true of their neighborhood school than of their requested school. The opposite view was given by those without child care involvement.

Respondents from the OUT transfer group with child care gave a higher percentage of not true responses for the requested school (53%) than for the neighborhood school (37%). Those without child care reported the opposite pattern with 21% stating it was not true of their requested school and 64% stating it was not true of their neighborhood school.

The highest percentage of non-favorable response (from a school's perspective) given for any of the 16 statements was provided by the OUT transfer group without child care involvement where 43% responded this statement was true of their requested school. Such a

response suggests class size did not cause OUT transfer parents without child care to seek a transfer to a school outside of the selected district.

Nearly three-fourths of the IN transfer respondents stated they did not know if this statement was true or not true of their neighborhood or requested school.

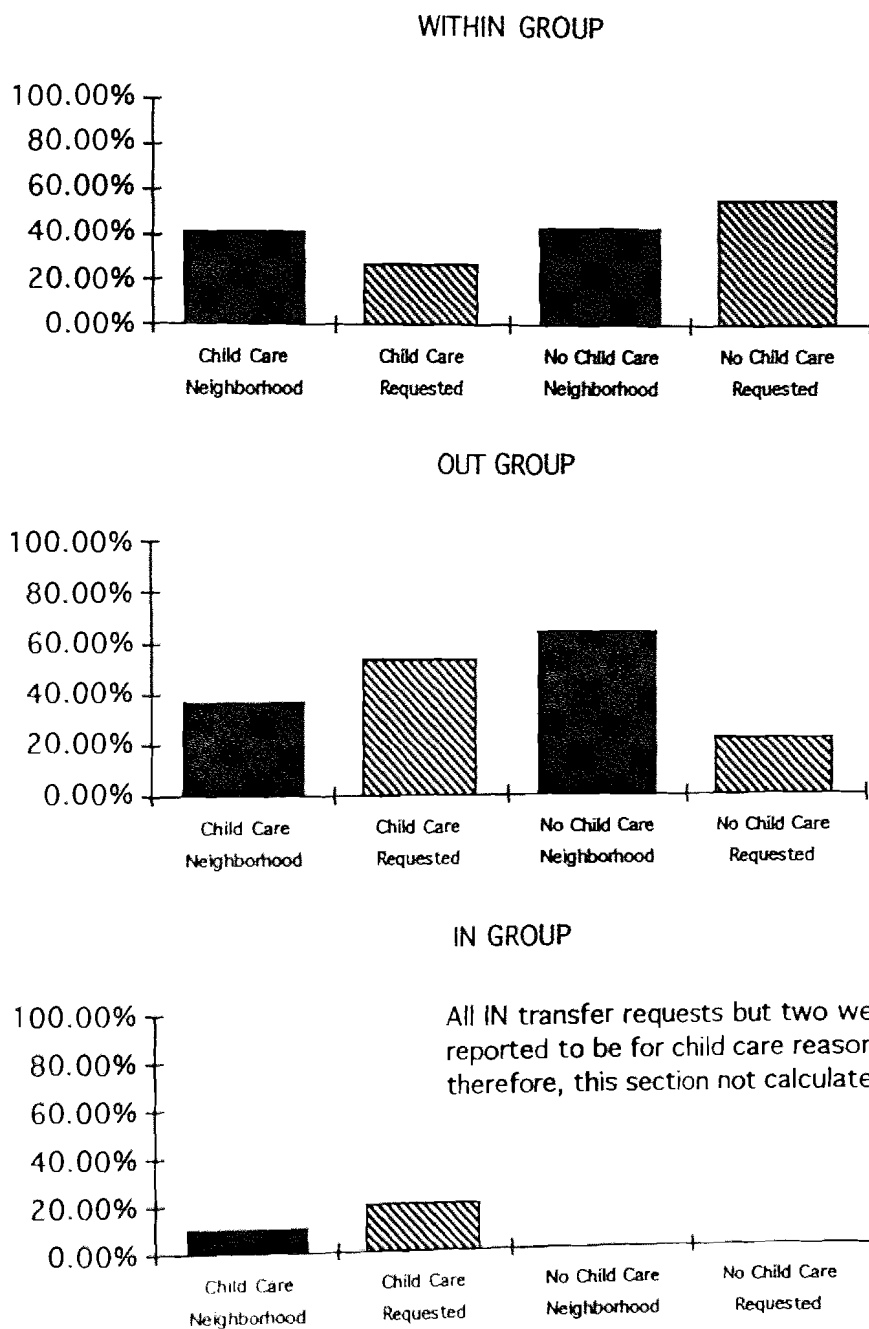
The percentage of parents not agreeing with the statement "there are too many students in a class" is shown by transfer type and with and without child care in Figure 16.

6. Not enough emphasis is placed on the arts.

This statement was one of only three statements which produced "don't know" response rates by all respondents that were greater than 60% for both the neighborhood and requested schools. Of those who did state an opinion, the vast majority said the statement was not true of the neighborhood nor of the requested school.

Thirteen percent of the WITHIN transfer group respondents without child care involvement responded this statement was true of their requested school. This was the only group which had a true response rate to this statement in excess of 10%.

Figure 16. Favorable response to "Too Many Students in Class" for neighborhood and requested schools by transfer type and child care/no child care.



Nearly three-fourths of the IN transfer group respondents gave a "don't know" response.

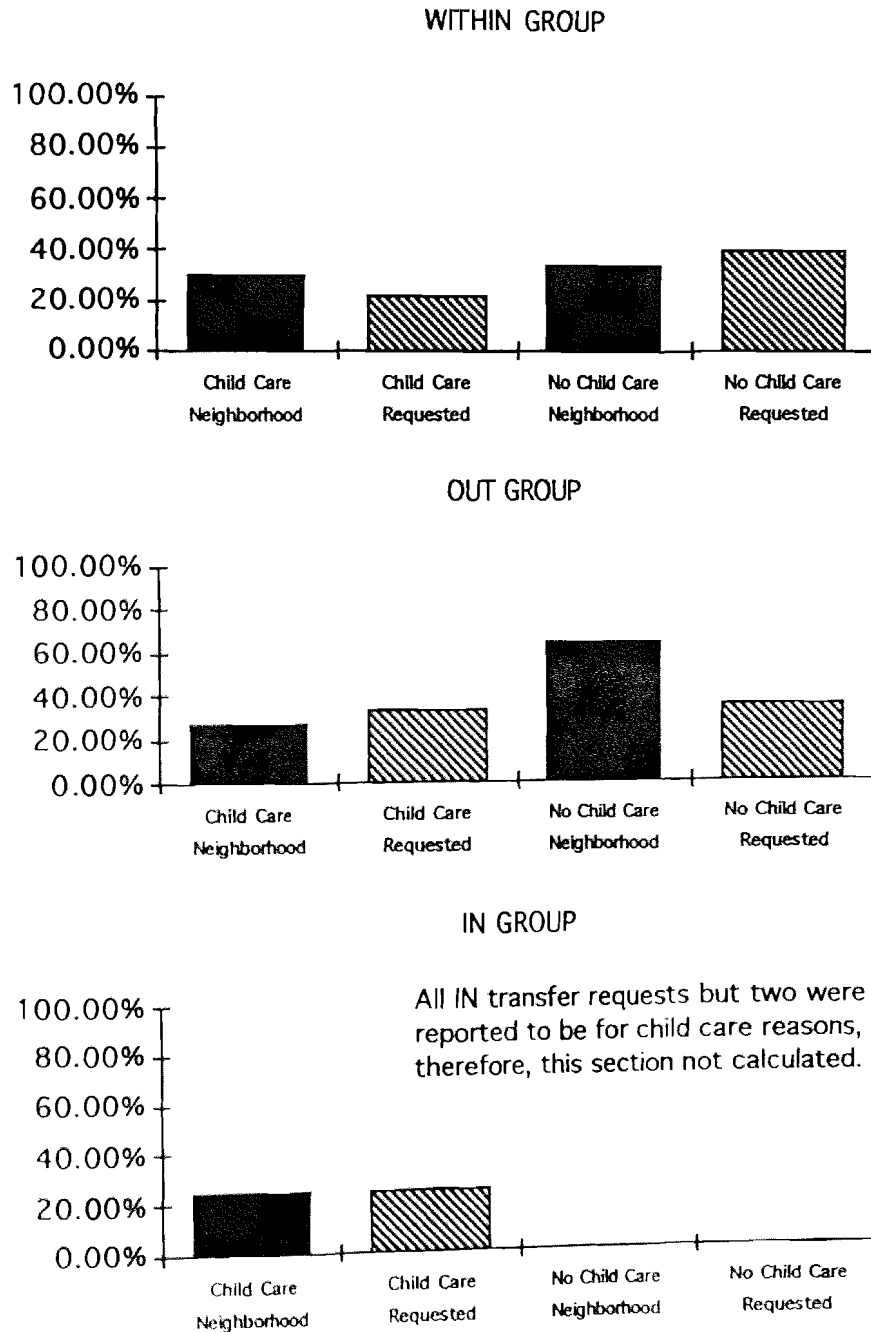
It does not appear that this statement identified an issue which attracted respondents to seek a transfer from their neighborhood school to their requested school.

The percentage of parents not agreeing with the statement "not enough emphasis is placed on the arts" is shown by transfer type and with and without child care in Figure 17.

7. The teaching of values is neglected.

Although just short of 50% of all respondents gave a "don't know" response to this statement for both the neighborhood and requested schools, the response rates of "don't know" for the WITHIN and OUT transfer group parents without child care involvement were much lower. This statement appears to indicate an issue of importance to those who sought transfers and did not have child care involvement. The percentages of not true responses for WITHIN transfer group respondents without child care involvement increased from 47% for the neighborhood school to 66% for the requested school. The change for the OUT transfer group was from

Figure 17. Favorable response to "Not Enough Emphasis on the Arts" for neighborhood and requested schools by transfer type and child care/no child care.



51% for the neighborhood school to 71% for the requested school.

The WITHIN transfer group respondents expressed a more favorable view of the neighborhood school relative to teaching values if they were transferring because of child care involvement, whereas those without child care involvement viewed the requested school more favorably in this area.

The OUT transfer group respondents regardless of child care involvement saw the requested school more favorably than the neighborhood school relative to this statement.

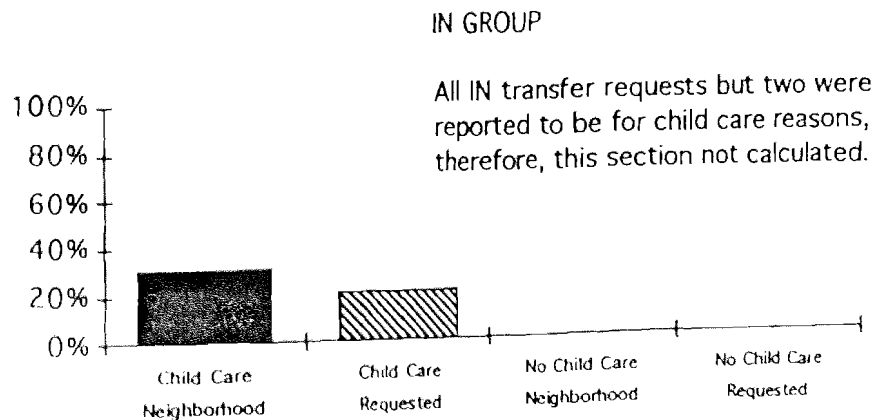
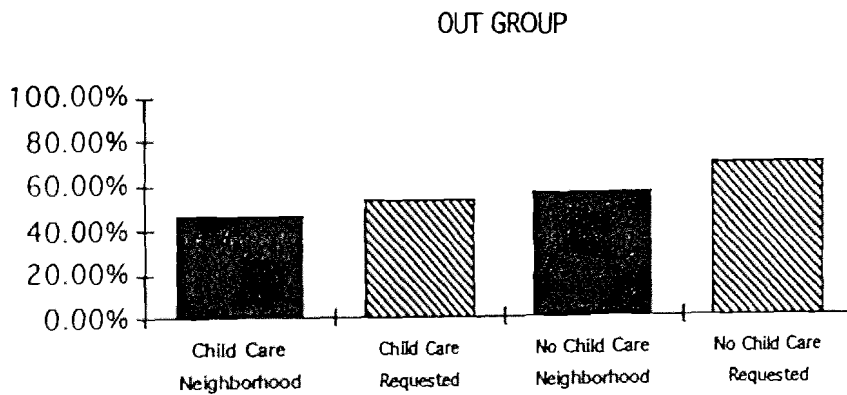
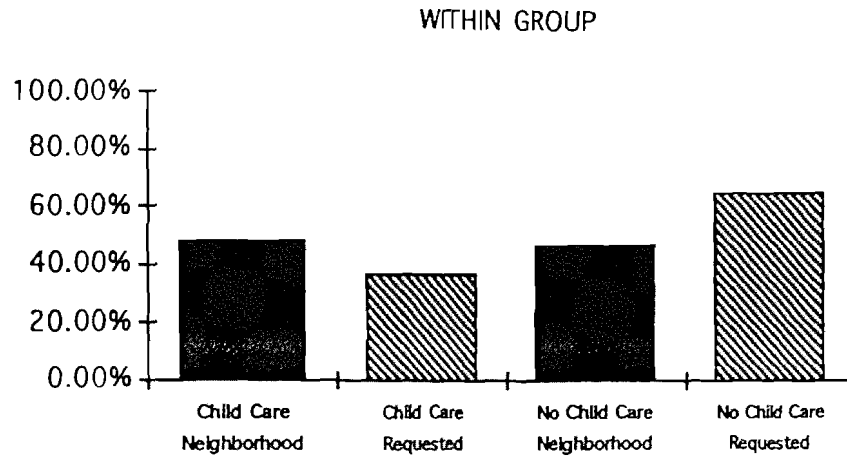
Nearly three-fourths of the IN group respondents reported they did not know if this statement was true or not true for both the neighborhood and requested schools.

The percentage of parents not agreeing with the statement "the teaching of values is neglected" is shown by transfer type and with and without child care in Figure 18.

8. Student discipline is good. This statement had the third lowest percentage of "don't know" responses from all respondents to the 16 statements.



Figure 18. Favorable response to "Teaching of Values Neglected" for neighborhood and requested schools by transfer type and child care/no child care.



It was also one of 5 statements which yielded a favorable (from the school's perspective) response rate of close to 50% for either the neighborhood or requested school.

The WITHIN transfer group respondents viewed their neighborhood school more favorably if child care was involved and the requested school if child care was not involved. Parents seeking OUT transfers without child care expressed more confidence in the discipline in their neighborhood school than in their requested school.

Seventy-one percent of the OUT transfer group respondents without child care indicated this statement was true of their neighborhood school. They gave the highest favorable response rate to this statement for their neighborhood school by any group for any statement while giving the highest percentage of negative response (school's perception) to their requested school by any group to any of the 16 statements.

The OUT transfer group respondents, regardless of child care involvement, gave their lowest "don't know" response rate for both the neighborhood and requested schools when responding to this statement.

The IN transfer group provided a higher percentage of "don't know" responses for both schools than did the WITHIN or OUT group respondents.

The percentage of parents agreeing with the statement "student discipline is good" is shown by transfer type and with and without child care in Figure 19.

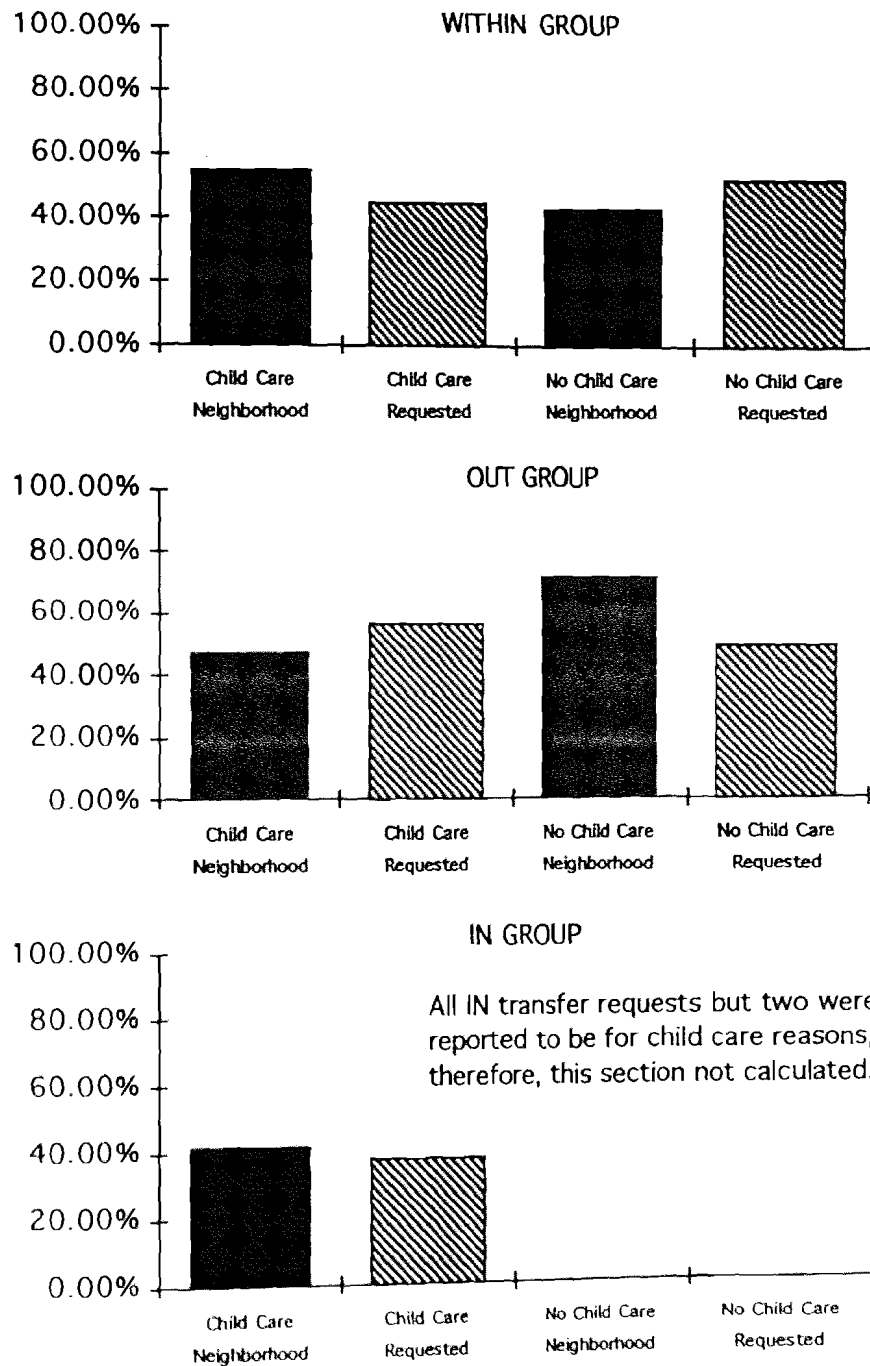
9. The school is not always clean. Almost one-half of all respondents reported they did not know if this statement was true or not true for both the neighborhood and requested schools. Those who did provide a true or not true response were much more likely to state it was not true for both the neighborhood and requested school.

The WITHIN transfer group respondents again expressed a more positive view toward the neighborhood school if child care was involved; without child care the requested school was more positively seen.

Respondents from the OUT transfer group reported a more favorable view of the school relative to this statement if child care was not involved.

The percentage of parents not agreeing with the statement "the school is not always clean" is shown by

Figure 19. Favorable response to "Student Discipline is Good" for neighborhood and requested schools by transfer type and child care/no child care.



transfer type and with and without child care in Figure 20.

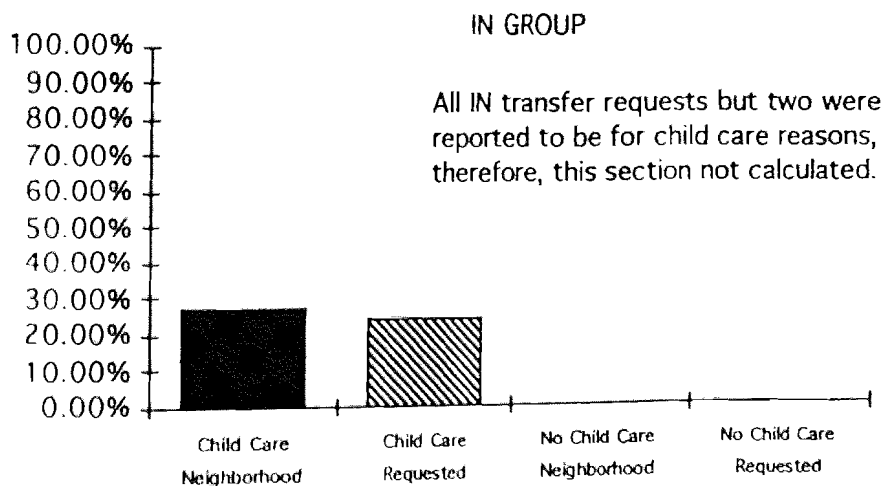
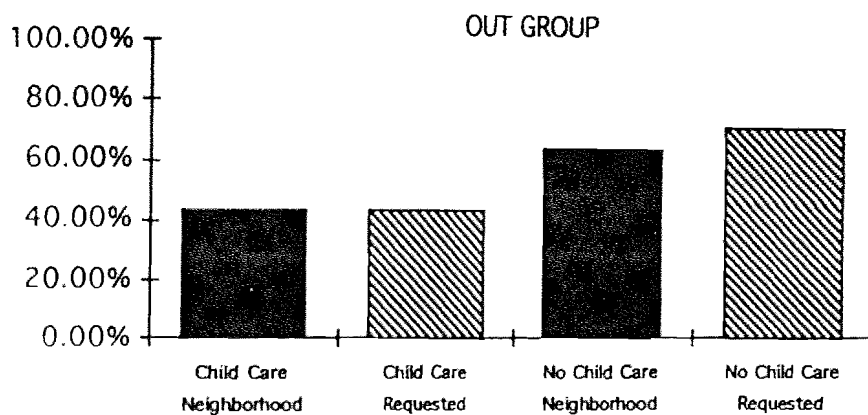
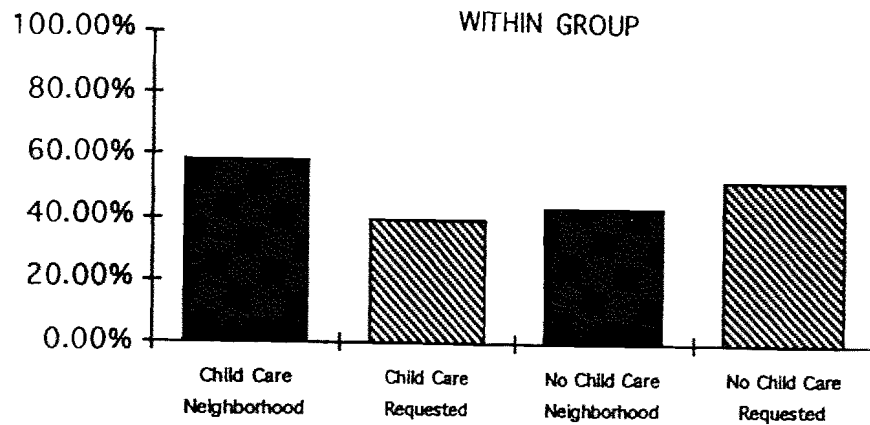
10. Teachers care about students. This statement generated the lowest percentage of "don't know" responses for the neighborhood school and second lowest for the requested school of all 16 statements. The highest favorable (from the school's perspective) rating by all respondents to any of the 16 statements for both the neighborhood and requested schools was given to this statement.

The WITHIN group respondents without child care viewed the requested school more favorably by 16 percentage points while those with child care favored the neighborhood school by 18 percentage points.

The OUT transfer group respondents reported the opposite pattern of preference: those with child care favored the requested school while those without child care favored the neighborhood school. Parents without child care viewed both schools more favorably relative to this statement than did those parents with child care.

Responses from IN transfer group parents were about the same for both the neighborhood and requested schools.

Figure 20. Favorable response to "School is Not Always Clean" for neighborhood and requested schools by transfer type and child care/no child care.



The percentage of parents agreeing with the statement "teachers care about students" is shown by transfer type and with and without child care in Figure 21.

11. The school staff does not usually respond to parent and community concerns. About one-half of all respondents reported they did not know if this statement was true or not.

The WITHIN parent responses by those with child care indicated a more positive view of the neighborhood school. Responses from WITHIN group respondents without child care and IN group respondents were about the same for both neighborhood and requested schools.

The OUT transfer respondents expressed a more favorable view of the requested school, regardless if child care was involved.

The percentage of parents not agreeing with the statement "the school staff does not usually respond to parent and community concerns" is shown by transfer type and with and without child care in Figure 22.

12. Parents in the school believe the principal will help resolve problems at the school. Slightly more than one-half of all respondents gave a "don't know" response to this statement. The WITHIN transfer

Figure 21. Favorable response to "Teachers Care About Students" for neighborhood and requested schools by transfer type and child care/no child care.

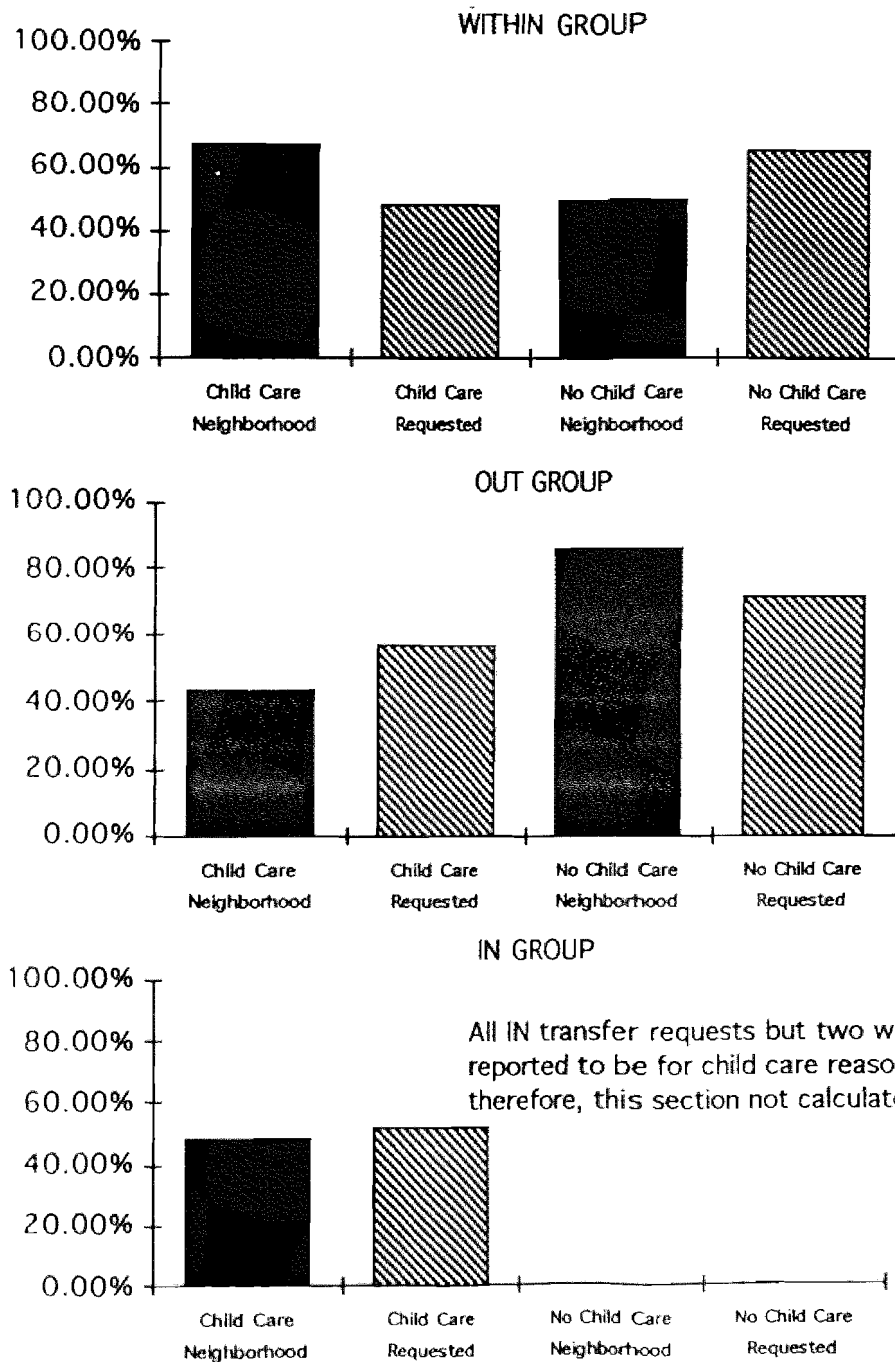
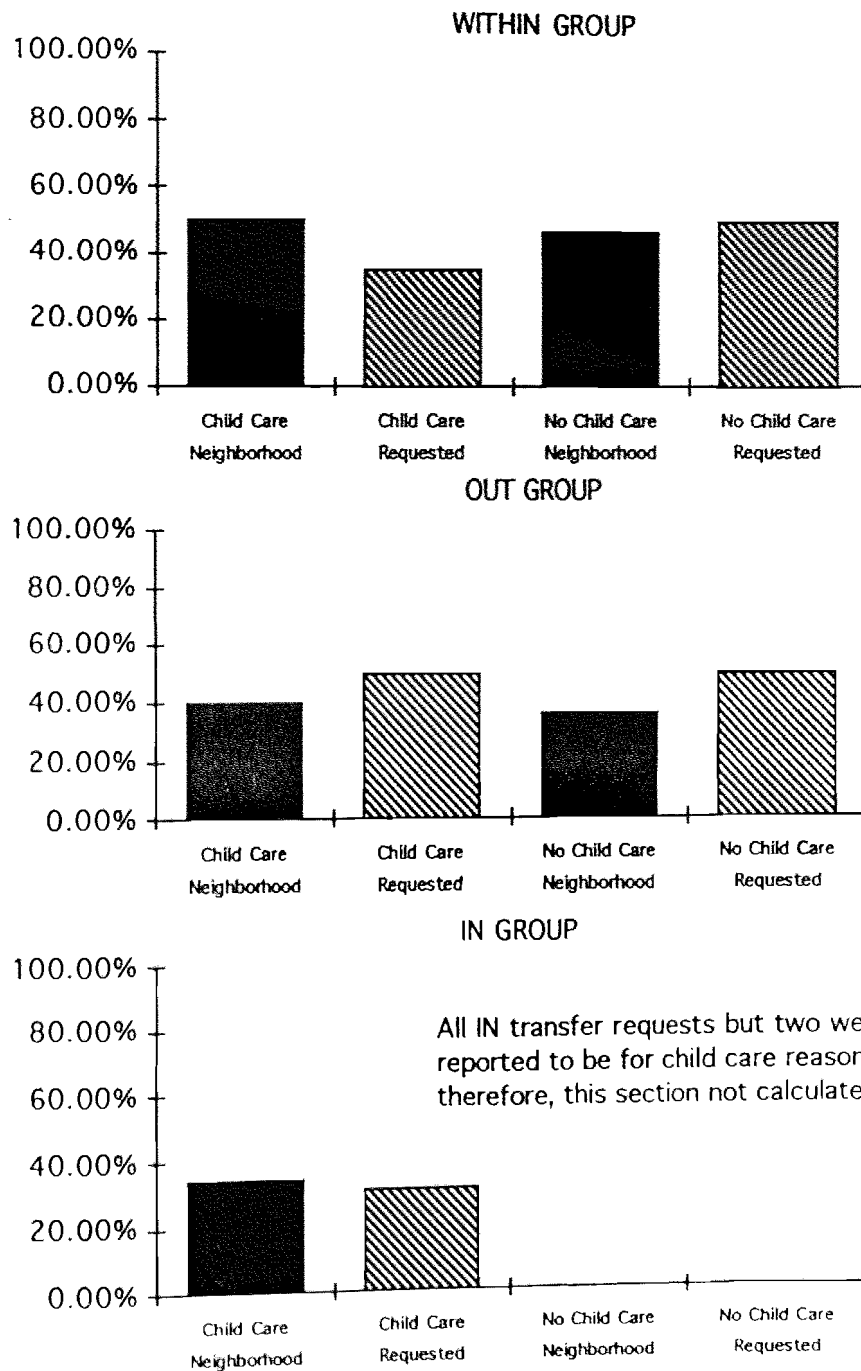




Figure 22. Favorable response to "School Doesn't Respond to Community" for neighborhood and requested schools by transfer type and child care/no child care.



respondents with child care involvement viewed the neighborhood school more positively while those without child care saw the requested school more positively.

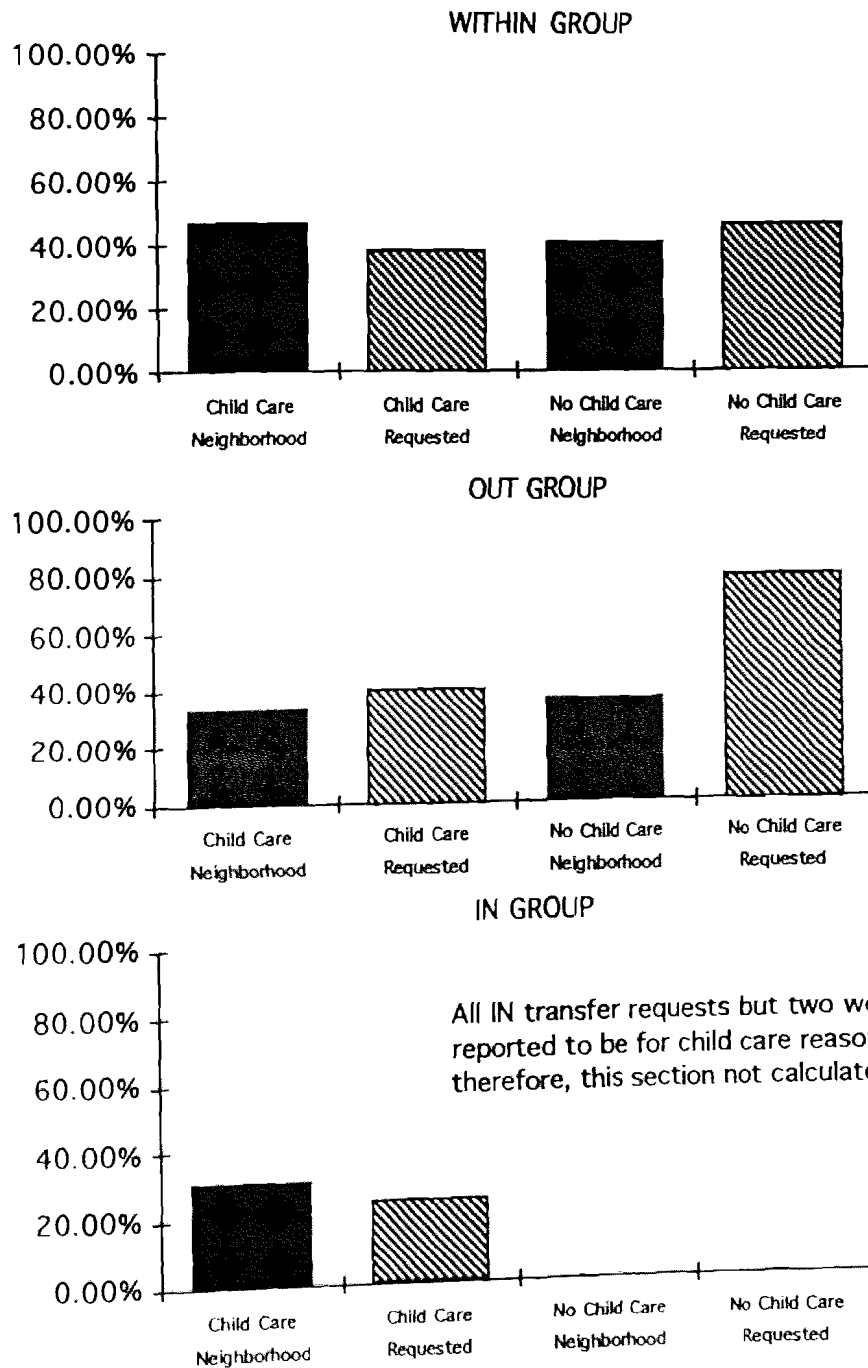
The OUT transfer respondents without child care were more than twice as likely to state the principal solved problems at the requested school than at the neighborhood school; one of the greatest percentage differences by any group to any statement. Parents with child care also favored the requested school.

About two-thirds of the IN transfer respondents gave a "don't know" response.

The percentage of parents agreeing with the statement "parents in the school believe the principal will help resolve problems at the school" is shown by transfer type and with and without child care in Figure 23.

13. Students are interested in doing well in school. The statement, "teachers care about students" and "the teachers are very good" were the only ones to generate a higher percentage of favorable responses toward the neighborhood and requested schools than this statement. Only three respondents said this statement was not true.

Figure 23. Favorable response to "Principal Solves Problems in School" for neighborhood and requested schools by transfer type and child care/no child care.



Transfer group respondents from the WITHIN group with child care involvement viewed the neighborhood school more positively than the requested school, as did the OUT group respondents without child care involvement.

The WITHIN group without child care and OUT group with child care saw their requested school more positively than their neighborhood school.

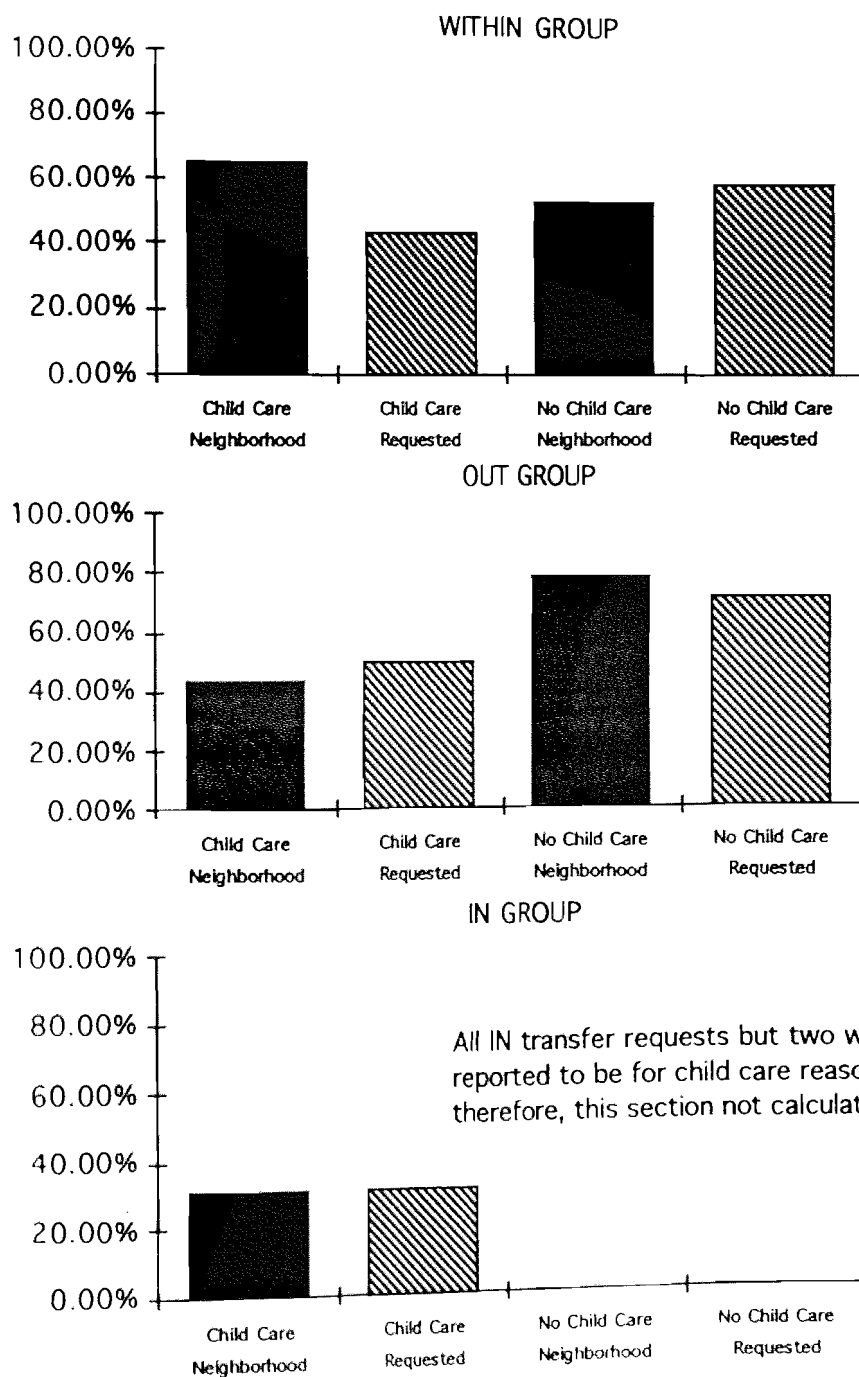
There was little difference in the responses for the neighborhood and requested schools provided by the IN group respondents.

The percentage of parents agreeing with the statement "students are interested in doing well" is shown by transfer type and with and without child care in Figure 24.

14. Students in this school have many problems.  
More than one-half of all respondents and of respondents from each transfer group reported they did not know if this statement was true or not true. The percentage difference between true and not true responses by all respondents and by respondents from each transfer group was the least of all 16 statements.

This statement garnered the highest percentage of negative responses of any of the 16 statements by the

Figure 24. Favorable response to "Students are Interested in Doing Well in School" for neighborhood and requested schools by transfer type and child care/no child care.



WITHIN group for the neighborhood school. Twenty-two percent of Within group respondents without child care said this statement was true of their neighborhood school while 10% with child care reported it to be true. However, a higher percentage without child care reported this statement was not true of their neighborhood school than did for the requested school.

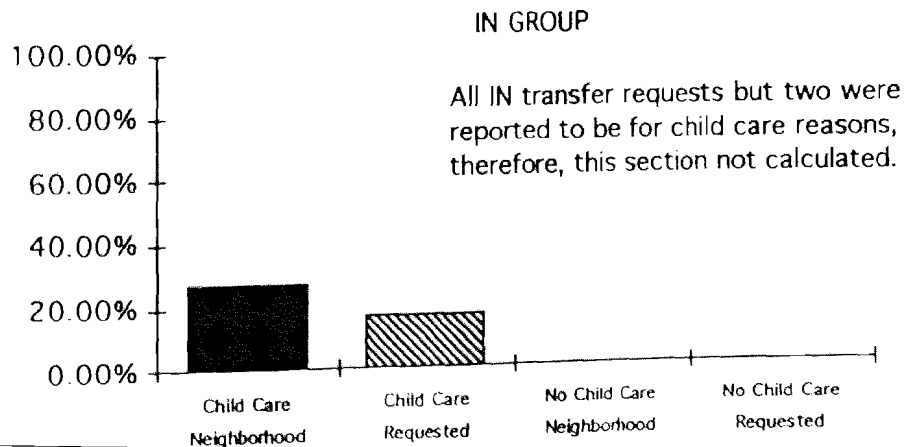
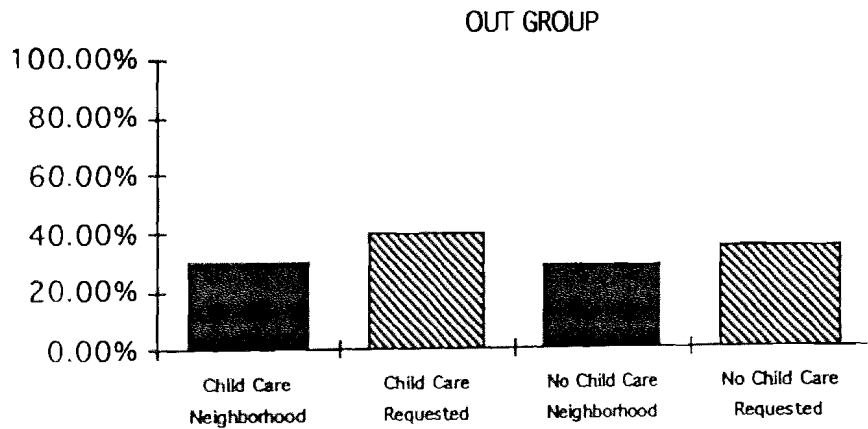
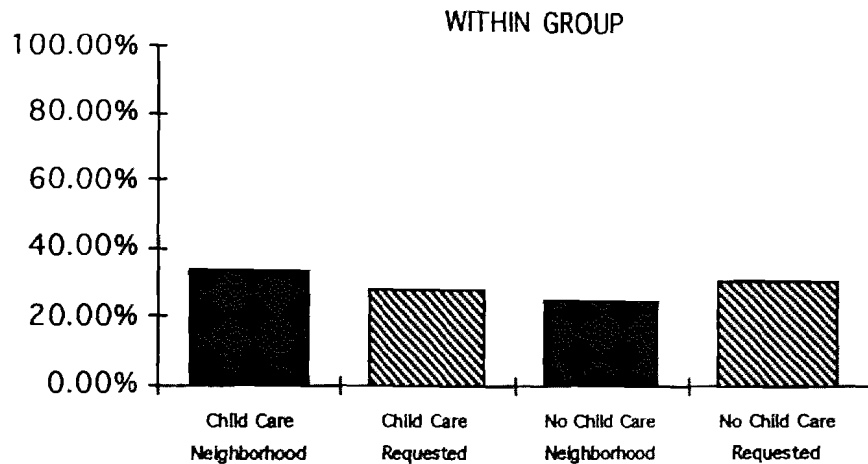
A higher percentage of OUT transfer group respondents with and without child care said this statement was not true of their requested school than of their neighborhood school.

Three more IN transfer respondents expressed the belief that this statement was not true of their neighborhood school than did of their requested school.

The percentage of parents not agreeing with the statement "students in this school have many problems" is shown by transfer type and with and without child care in Figure 25.

15. There is not enough racial diversity in the student body. This statement was one of three that produced over 60% reporting they did not know if the statement was true or not true for either the neighborhood or requested school. The other two were,

Figure 25. Favorable response to "Students in School Have Many Problems" for neighborhood and requested schools by transfer type and child care/no child care.



"student test scores are high" and "there is not enough emphasis on the arts."

The WITHIN group respondents with child care viewed their neighborhood school somewhat more positively than their requested school; those without child care viewed their requested school more positively relative to this statement.

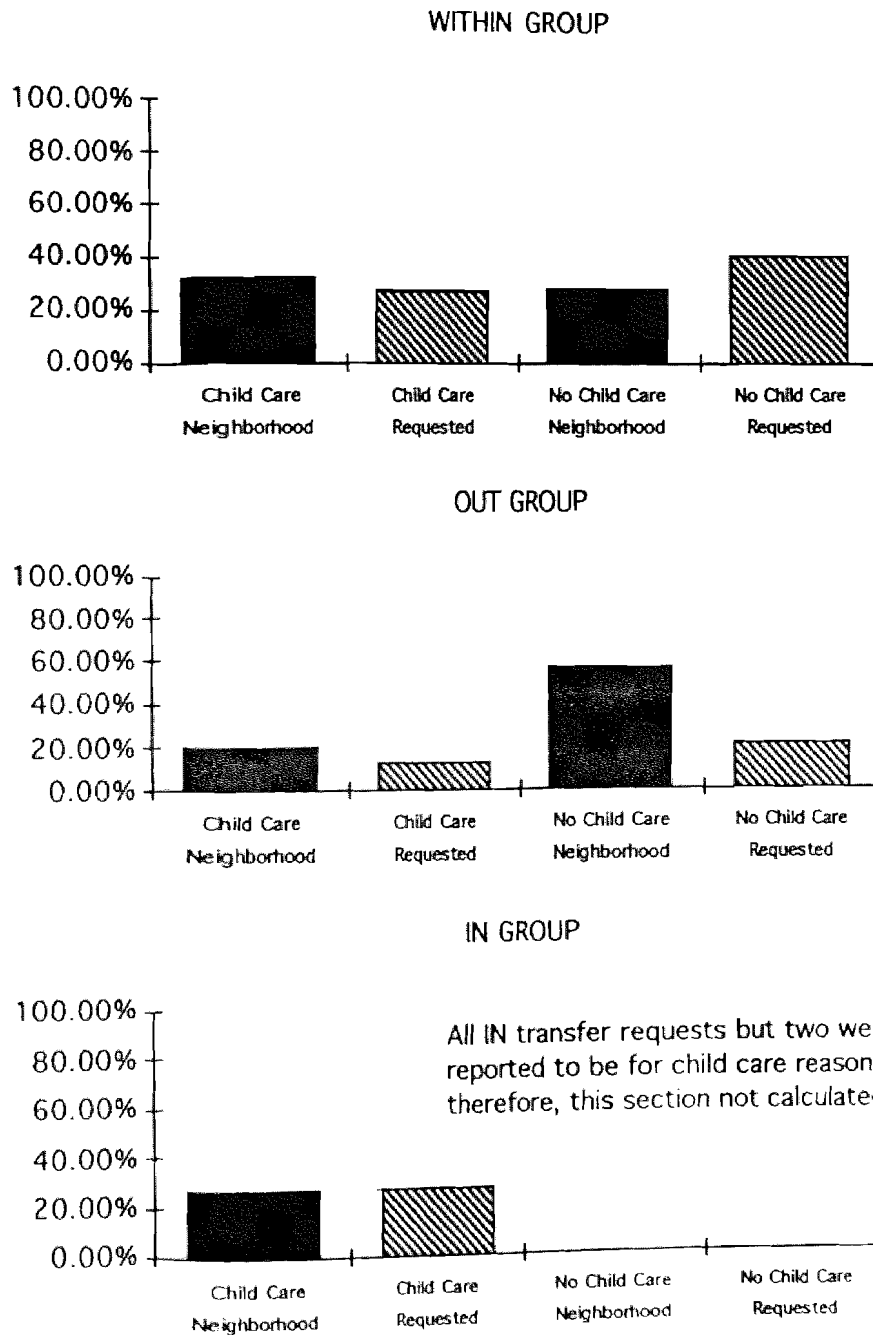
Fifty-seven percent of the OUT group without child care reported this statement was not true of their neighborhood school; 21% so reported for their requested school. Over 70% of OUT group respondents with child care stated they did not know if this statement was true or not true. This was the only statement to yield a 70% "don't know" response by either the WITHIN or OUT groups for either the requested or neighborhood school.

The IN group respondents expressed little percentage difference between their neighborhood and requested schools in their don't know, true, and not true responses.

The percentage of parents not agreeing with the statement "there is not enough racial diversity in the student body" is shown by transfer type and with and without child care in Figure 26.



Figure 26. Favorable response to "Not Enough Racial Diversity in Student Body" for neighborhood and requested schools by transfer type and child care/no child care.



16. The school's reputation is not particularly good. This statement yielded the lowest percentage of "don't know" responses by all respondents for the requested school, and the second lowest percentage response for the neighborhood school. The requested school also had the highest percentage of negative (from a school's perspective) responses of any of the 16 statements.

A higher percentage (19%) of respondents from the WITHIN transfer group without child care said this statement was not true of their requested school than so stated for their neighborhood school. Sixty percent with child care saw their neighborhood school as having a good reputation compared to 43% for their requested school.

A higher percentage of those with and without child care from the OUT transfer group reported their requested school had a good reputation than so reported for their neighborhood school.

About the same percentage of IN transfer group respondents reported this statement was not true of their neighborhood school as did for their requested school.

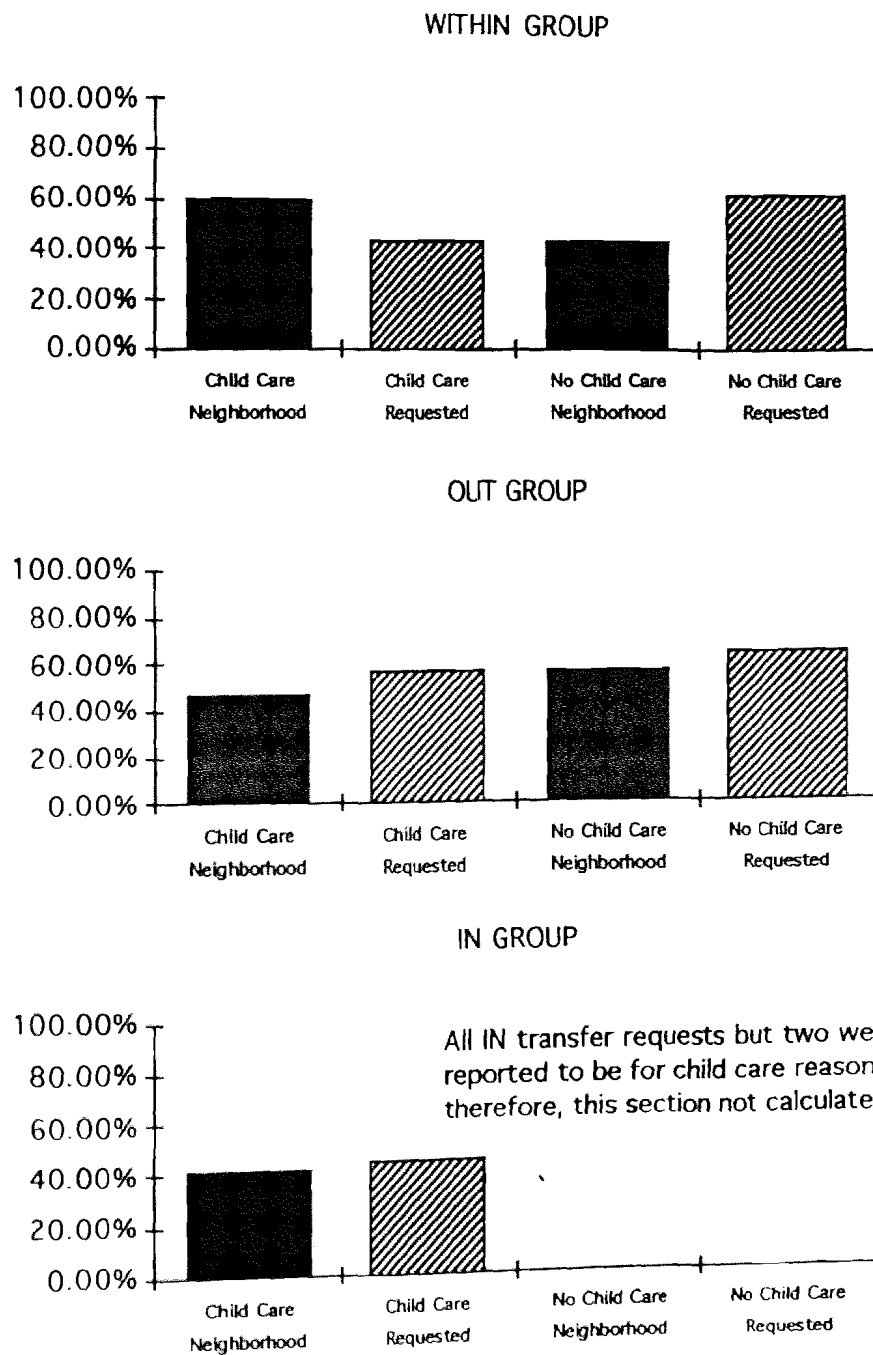
The percentage of parents not agreeing with the statement "the school's reputation is not particularly good" is shown by transfer type and with and without child care in Figure 27.

School selection item three identified the parent's most important reason for requesting a transfer to the selected non-neighborhood school. The reason was chosen from five reasons provided to the respondent.

As a total group, 48% of WITHIN transfer respondents reported the most important reason for selecting their requested school was the school's instructional program. About 25% of the respondents gave convenience as the most important reason and another 25% named safety and discipline. Diversity of the student body was named most important reason by 2%.

Forty-five percent of WITHIN transfer group respondents with child care involvement named the instructional program; 20% said safety and discipline and 33% stated the most important reason was convenience. Twelve percent of those without child care named convenience as the most important reason for selecting the requested school; 53% said it was the

Figure 27. Favorable response to "School's Reputation is Not Good" for neighborhood and requested schools by transfer type and child care/no child care.



instructional program and 31% said it was safety and discipline.

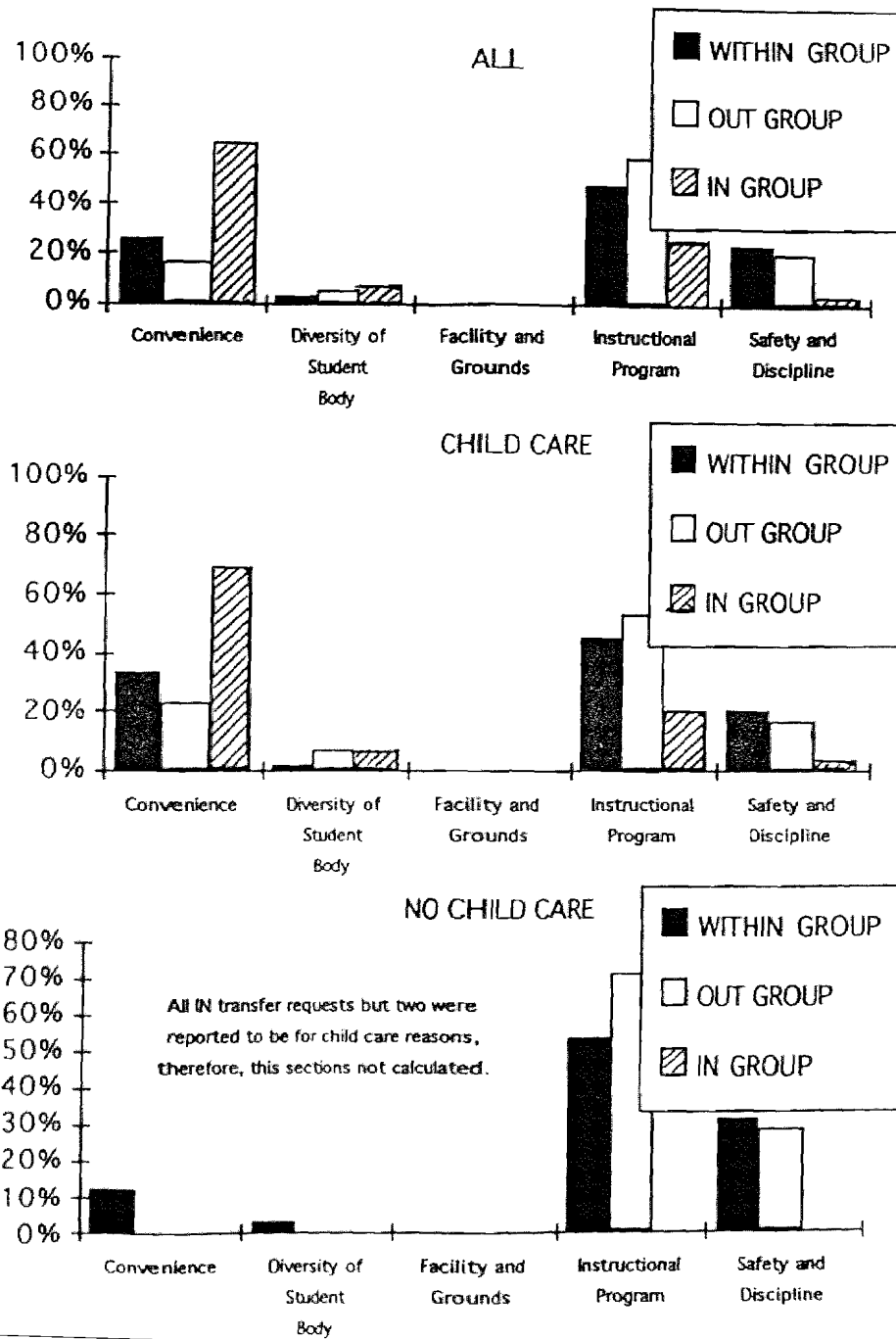
The majority of OUT transfer group respondents reported the instructional program was the most important reason for selecting the requested school (59%), with 20% naming safety and discipline, 16% convenience, and 5% student diversity.

Fifty-three percent of OUT transfer respondents with child care involvement reported the most important reason was the instructional program followed by convenience (23%), safety and discipline (17%), and student diversity (7%). Those without child care named either the school's instructional program (71%) or safety and discipline (29%) as the most important reason for selecting the requested school.

Sixty-five percent of IN transfer group respondents reported convenience as the most important reason (94% stated child care arrangements influenced their transfer decisions). Other reasons were: instructional program (26%), student diversity (6%), and safety and discipline (3%).

The most important reason for selecting a school is shown by transfer type and with and without child care in Figure 28.

Figure 28. Most important reason for transfer.



School selection Item Four identified the respondents' least important reasons for selecting the requested school. A least important reason was selected by all respondents from five specified reasons.

No respondent from any transfer group identified the school's instructional program as the least important reason for school selection. A total of two respondents identified safety and discipline as being of least importance to their school selection.

The least important reason for selecting their requested school by all WITHIN group respondents was identified as student diversity by 39%; 33% reported convenience, 18% facility and grounds, and 2% safety and discipline.

Those without child care arrangements were more likely to name convenience as their least important reason (56%) than were those with child care (25%). Those with child care were more likely to name student diversity (50%) than those without child care (39%). About the same percentage with and without child care identified facility as the least important reason.

The OUT group respondents identified convenience (40%), student diversity (30%) and facility and grounds

(30%) as the least important reasons for selecting their requested school. Seventy-one percent of the respondents without child care involvement identified convenience as their least important reason, while 26% with child care identified convenience.

Fifty-five percent of IN transfer group respondents identified student diversity as the least important reason for selecting their requested school. Thirty-nine percent identified facility and grounds and 6% reported convenience.

Those requesting IN transfers were more likely to state that child care arrangements were associated with their transfer requests and were more likely to have lower family incomes than those seeking WITHIN or OUT transfers. Convenience may be of less importance to those with greater financial means.

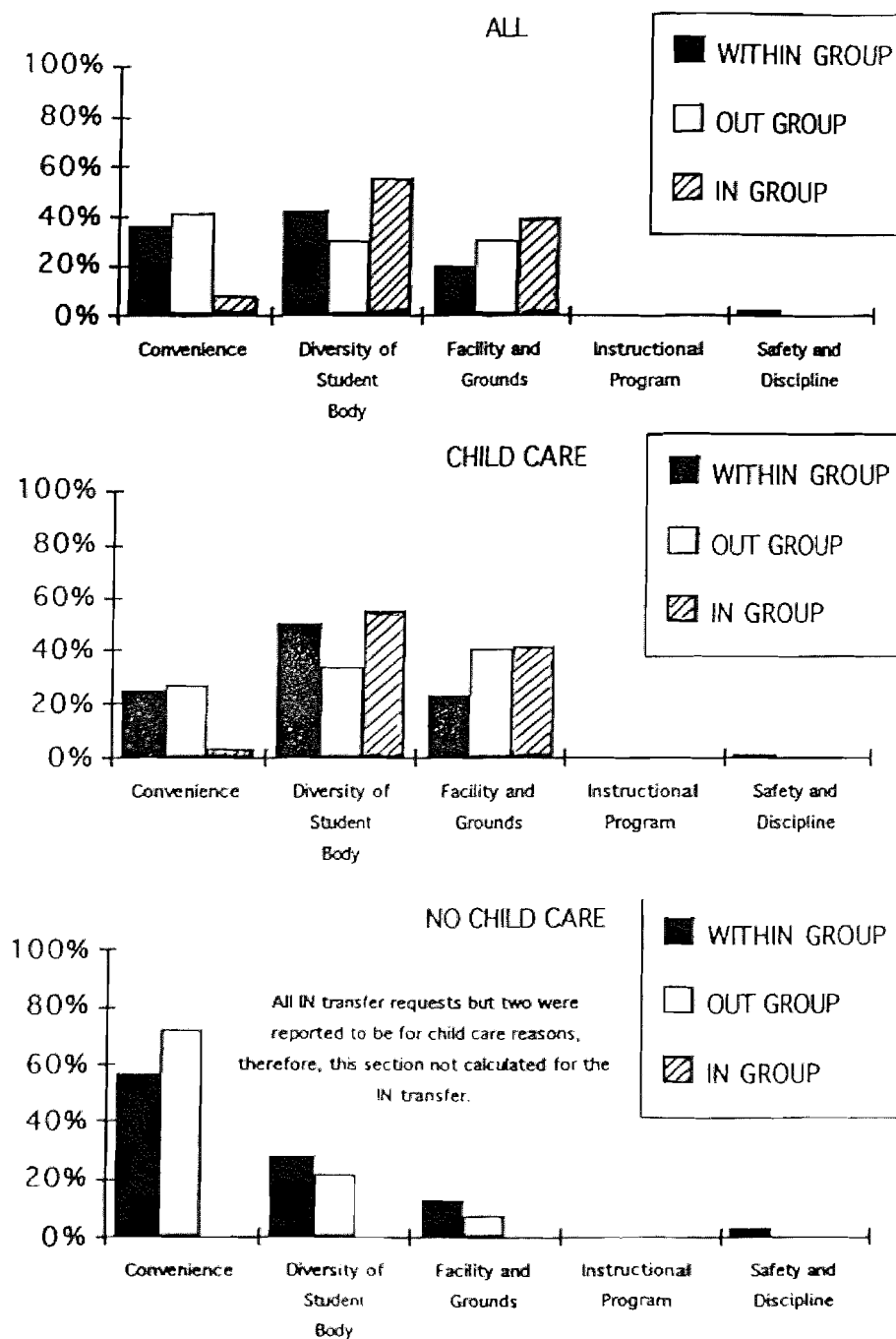
The least important reason for selecting the requested school is shown by transfer type and with and without child care in Figure 29.

#### School Selection Summary

Sixteen school selection statements were read to the interviewees. The respondents were asked to indicate if they agreed or disagreed with each of the



Figure 29. Least important reason for transfer.



statements. They were also provided the option of stating if they did not know if they agreed or disagreed with the statements.

Each of the 16 statements yielded some "don't know" responses. Parents of kindergarten students were more likely to give "don't know" responses than were parents of students in grades 1-5.

As a total group, parents who requested transfers expressed a somewhat more positive view of their neighborhood than requested school. However, there were striking percentage differences relative to which school was viewed more positively when respondents were grouped by transfer type and according to whether child care was a stated reason for the transfer.

The WITHIN transfer group parents who stated child care was a reason for their transfer request reported a more favorable view of their neighborhood school when responding to each of the 16 statements. Parents for whom child care was not a factor had the opposite view of the schools; each of the 16 statements produced a more positive view of the requested school than for the neighborhood school. The consistency with which parents favored one school over the other depending on

whether child care was a factor for the transfer request was unexpected.

The OUT transfer group parents who stated child care was a reason for their transfer request rated the requested school more favorably than the neighborhood school when responding to all but three of the statements. This response was unexpected and nearly opposite that of the WITHIN transfer group parents with child care. Parents from the OUT transfer group without child care arrangements reported a more favorable view of the neighborhood school when responding to a majority of the statements. It was surprising to learn that the parents without child care reported a more positive view of the neighborhood school for presumably those whose transfer requests were not influenced by child care needs would be more likely to request a particular school because of their like for that school and/or their dislike of their neighborhood school.

All but two of the parents requesting IN transfers reported their request was based on child care needs. There were more statements which produced a positive view of the neighborhood school than did of the requested school by respondents from this group.

When asked the most important reason for requesting a transfer, the majority of parents from the OUT and WITHIN transfer groups, regardless of child care involvement, stated the schools instructional program was most important. The majority of IN transfer group parents, however, gave convenience as the most important reason. The instructional program was not named as the least important reason for requesting a transfer by any parent from any group.

#### Thinking About Requesting a Transfer

This item identified the length of time the respondent considered asking for a transfer before actually requesting one. Respondents were asked to indicate how long they thought about asking for a transfer before actually requesting one. Their responses were placed in one of three categories: 1-4 weeks, 1-6 months, 6 months or longer.

As a total group, respondents were more likely to state they had thought 6 months or longer (42%) about requesting a transfer than to state 1-6 months (29%) or 1-4 weeks (29%), and all respondents not having child care involvement were more likely to have thought about a transfer longer than those with child care.

Respondents reporting their child was academically above average were more likely to have thought about the transfer for a longer period of time than those who reported their child was academically average.

At least one-half WITHIN and OUT transfer respondents reported thinking about requesting a transfer six months or more before actually requesting the transfer.

Ninety-four percent of IN transfer respondents reported child care arrangements influenced their decision to seek a school transfer. They reported either spending less than 4 weeks (66%) thinking about seeking a transfer or thinking about it for 1-6 months (34%). There were no IN transfer group parents with child care involvement who reported thinking for six months or more about requesting a transfer.

Unlike the total group of respondents, WITHIN transfer group parents with child care were more likely to have thought for a longer period of time about requesting a transfer than those without child care. Fifty-seven percent of the respondents with child care reported they thought about asking for a transfer for six months or longer before actually doing so.

Forty-four percent of those without child care reported thinking about a transfer for the same period of time.

One half of the OUT transfer respondents with or without child care reported considering a transfer for six months or more before requesting one. Less than 15% from either group stated they thought for less than four weeks about asking for a transfer.

Those who are interested in helping parents make school choice decisions and those who operate the schools and are responsible for maintaining a particular level of enrollment need to know when during the school selection process parents make decisions about school transfers. Clearly, different parents make the decision at different times. However, data in the study suggest that it may be possible to focus specific input relative to school selection to particular parents at identified time periods.

For example, 86% of OUT transfer group parents without child care arrangements reported they had thought about requesting a transfer for at least one month before actually applying for one. And one-half of all OUT transfer parents thought about requesting a transfer for at least six months before requesting one. Seventy percent of the parents of students entering

kindergarten reported they thought about a transfer for a minimum of one month before requesting it.

Thinking about Requesting a Transfer Summary

The WITHIN and OUT transfer parents reported spending more time thinking about requesting a transfer before actually requesting one than did IN transfer parents. Approximately one-half of WITHIN and OUT transfer group parents reported thinking about requesting a transfer for six months or more. However, no IN transfer group parents reported thinking about requesting a transfer for more than six months and considerably more than one-half reported thinking about requesting a transfer for less than four weeks before actually requesting one. Approximately 25% of WITHIN transfer parents and about 10% of OUT transfer parents reported thinking about a transfer for less than four weeks.

A breakdown of data for this item is shown in Figure 30 and in Tables 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16.

Figure 30. Distribution of time spent thinking about a transfer before actually requesting one.

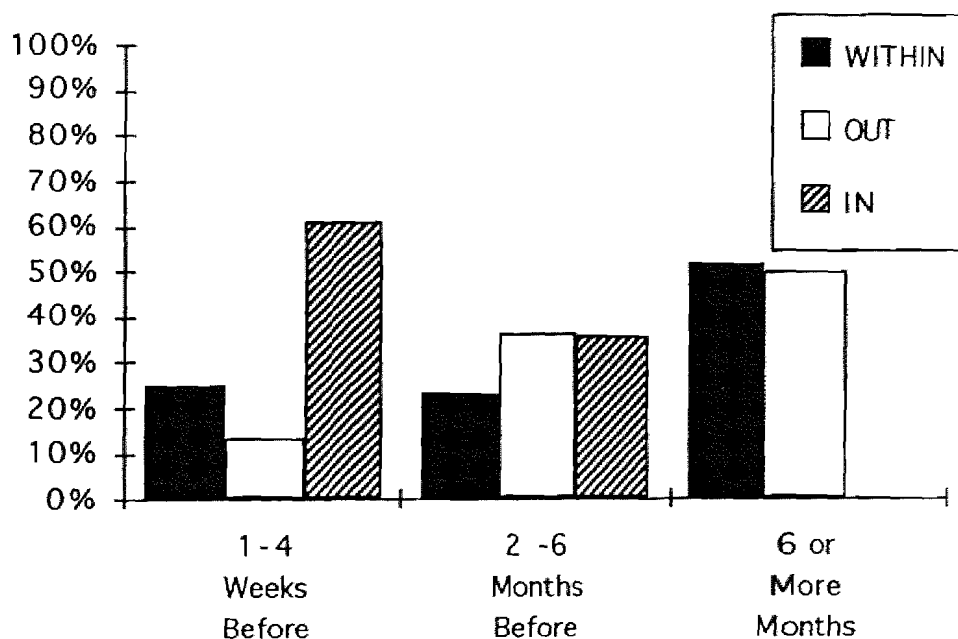


Table 15

Length of Time Thinking about Requesting a Transfer

	Within		Out		In	
Length of Time Thinking About Requesting a Transfer Before Actually Requesting One	Child Care	No Child Care	Child Care	No Child Care	Child Care	No Child Care
1-4 Weeks	23%	28%	13%	14%	66%	
1-6 Months	20%	28%	37%	36%	34%	
6 Months or Longer	57%	44%	50%	50%		



Table C-16

Length of Time Thinking about Requesting a Transfer by  
Child Care/no Child Care

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Length of Time Thinking About Requesting a Transfer Before Actually Requesting One	All Respondents	With Child Care	Without Child Care
1-4 Weeks	29%	31%	23%
1-6 Months	29%	28%	31%
6 Months or Longer	42%	41%	44%

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Table C-17

Length of Time Thinking about Requesting a Transfer by  
Student Grade Level

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	Grade Level					
Length of Time Thinking About Requesting a Transfer Before Actually Requesting One	K	1	2	3	4	5
1-4 Weeks	30%	25%	25%	46%	22%	25%
1-6 Months	32%	38%	25%	23%	11%	25%
6 Months or Longer	38%	37%	50%	31%	67%	50%

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Table C-18

Length of Time Thinking about Requesting a Transfer  
and Student Academic Level (All respondents)

Length of Time Thinking About Requesting a Transfer Before Actually Requesting One	Academic Level		
	About Average	Below Average	Above Average
1-4 Weeks	34%	40%	20%
1-6 Months	29%		30%
6 Months or Longer	37%	60%	50%

Table C-19

Length of Time Thinking about Requesting a Transfer by  
Length of Time at Residence (All respondents)

Length of Time Thinking About Requesting a Transfer Before Actually Requesting One	Time at Residence	
	Less Than One Year	More Than One Year
1-4 Weeks	40%	23%
1-6 Months	50%	35%
6 Months or Longer	10%	63%

Chapter V  
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION  
AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The research described herein concerned the self-reported school choice behavior of public elementary school parents who selected one of three school choice options. The groups of parents were: those living in the selected school district and requesting a transfer for their child from the public school near their home and to which the student had been assigned to attend by the school district to another public school in the district--a WITHIN transfer; those living in the selected school district and requesting a transfer to a public school in another school district--an OUT transfer; those living outside of the selected district and requesting a transfer to a public school in the selected district--an IN transfer.

The opportunity to choose a public school within and outside of the resident school district is not available to many parents and students in the United States. Most school districts assign students to schools based on where they live and do not provide

enrollment options, particularly to schools in other school districts. As previously discussed in Chapters I and II, a number of parents, educators and school reform proponents have urged school districts and states to provide more opportunities for school choice to parents and students. This exploratory study examined how parents requesting transfers selected a school for their elementary student from among three types of public school choice options.

The conclusions, implications, and recommendations discussed in this chapter should be interpreted relative to the limitations described earlier in the study. The limitations are: (a) The study included only those parents who requested a transfer for an elementary school [K-5] student, (b) The study was restricted to requests for transfers made by parents who either lived in the selected school district or lived outside of the district and requested a transfer to the selected district, (c) The study only included those parents who requested a transfer for the 1991-92 school year and whose request was made between July 1, 1990, and February 15, 1991, (d) The study did not address transfers to schools because of an identified need for specialized special education or English as a

Second Language programming or to schools that are a part of the district's desegregation program and for which free transportation would have been provided to the student by the school district, (e) The data may be biased because a portion of the population was eliminated from the study due to suspect data. (This possible limitation is discussed in Chapter III.)

This study was designed to provide information on the important issue of parental selection of public elementary schools in an open enrollment system. Specifically, this study sought information with which to answer the following questions:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of the elementary school parents who have sought to exercise specific school choice options?
2. What school selection factors were important to parents who requested the transfers?
3. For how long did parents consider requesting a school transfer before actually requesting one?

All parents of 1991 school year kindergarten through fifth grade students who requested an open enrollment transfer between July, 1990, and February 15, 1991, to a school in the selected district or who

were residents of the selected district and requested a transfer to a public school outside of the selected district were included in the study.

A telephone survey was developed by the researcher and its content validity tested by professional school administrators who were knowledgeable about school choice opportunities for elementary students in the selected school district. The utility of the survey was determined by field testing with parents. Telephone interviewers were employed and trained by the researcher. Details of the methodology are presented in Chapter III.

The data for this study were collected in July and August 1991 through telephone interviews. The parents who had signed the transfer request forms were the individuals interviewed. One hundred sixty-seven interviews were completed. Ninety-two, or 55%, of the interviews were with parents who requested a transfer from one district school to another; 44, or 26%, were completed by district residents requesting a transfer to a school outside of the selected district; 31, or 19%, were completed by parents living outside the selected district and requesting a district school.

This Chapter is organized so that the summaries of the findings, conclusions, discussions of the implications, and recommendations for further study follow each of the three research questions.

#### Research Question 1

What are the demographic characteristics of the elementary school parents who have sought to exercise specific school choice options?

#### Demographic Summary

Eleven parent demographic characteristics were used to develop a profile of parents who requested transfers. The general profile varied according to the type of transfer requested.

Parents who requested transfers to a school outside of the selected district were more likely to be older, have lived at their current residences longer, and have higher family incomes and more education than parents from the other two transfer groups. The OUT transfer parents were also more likely than other parents to have reported that: child care arrangements were not a transfer consideration, the requested school district was not as convenient to them as the neighborhood school, both parents had considered the

transfer request, and their children were academically above average.

Parents who lived outside of the selected district and requested transfers to a selected district school were more likely to be younger, have lower incomes, have less education, and have lived at their residences for a shorter time than OUT and WITHIN transfer parents. Also, IN transfer parents were more likely than OUT or WITHIN parents to report that a child care arrangement was the reason for the transfer request, that only the mother had considered the transfer, and that the requested school was more convenient to them than the neighborhood school. The demographic characteristics of parents requesting a transfer from one school in the selected district to another school in the selected district were between those parents requesting a transfer out of the district and those requesting one into the district with respect to family income, parent education, length of time they had lived at their residence, and parent education. The WITHIN transfer group parents were more likely than parents from the other two groups to report they had attended a non-neighborhood public elementary school when they were students themselves.



The findings in this study relate to some of the findings discussed in the literature review. Earlier studies have shown that parents who select private schools for their children have a higher level of income and have completed more years of schooling than public school parents (Darling-Hammond & Kirby, 1985; Finn 1986; Krausher, 1972). The WITHIN and OUT transfer groups' parents had family incomes which exceeded the average income of \$26,056 of a family in the selected district in 1990 (1991 Survey of Buying Power).

Both the WITHIN and OUT transfer parents reported their most important reason for asking for a transfer was the school's instructional program. The IN transfer parents indicated their most important reason was convenience of the school. Behavior of the IN group parents was consistent with conclusions by Maddus (1985). He reported that geographical location of the school was the most important factor in parents' placement decisions in the Alum Rock voucher experiment, even when transportation was provided. However, both the OUT and WITHIN parents named convenience as the least important reason for their transfer request.

Mothers were reported to be the first to consider requesting a transfer for the student in the great majority of families. This particular finding of the involvement of mothers in the students' school decisions was consistent with those of Cogan (1979), Bridge and Blackman (1978), and Uchitelle (1977).

#### Demographic Conclusions and Discussion

The tendency for parents to somewhat segregate themselves by socioeconomic status through school choice was evident in the data and may suggest that including more choice may accelerate the general tendency of the selected school district and other urban school districts to become more segregated. This tendency may have implications for those considering or promoting the expansion of choice to include public and non-public schools.

The suggestion that school choice through open enrollment may result in greater homogeneity in schools in terms of student socioeconomic status is an interesting notion to consider. School choice would seem to offer parents the opportunity to select a school environment for their children consistent with their aspirations and possibly apart from that

determined for them based on their social class or where they live (Oakley, 1985). However, the findings in this study lend support to previous research which suggests otherwise. Bridge and Blackman (1978) reported parents choose school programs to reinforce their values. Scott (1986) concluded from a study of the reasons for public and non-public enrollment that parents were interested in providing a homogeneous social grouping for their children. Oakley (1985) concludes that if parents choose schools solely on the basis of values which result from their social class backgrounds, parental choice may result in greater homogeneity. This study is too limited to substantiate such contentions; however, the data fail to contradict the issue, making it one the schools will need to monitor.

Data collected in this study suggest that over time the transfer of students out of and into the selected district could change the socioeconomic mix of the students attending the district schools. The relative number of students with the socioeconomic characteristics associated with those who have historically been less successful in school has been increasing in the district schools for the past

several years. Open enrollment may accelerate this trend while simultaneously decreasing the number of students who have historically been more successful. The students who have traditionally been most successful in schools have characteristics similar to those in this study who are leaving the selected district through open enrollment. These are the students whose parents have among other characteristics higher education levels and higher family incomes. To some extent this conclusion is supportive of one made by Murnane (1984) when he reported that those most likely to choose to attend the perceived "better" schools are the most informed families, the middle and upper socioeconomic classes.

Many of the OUT transfer parents reported their children were academically above average. If true, the loss of these students along with the increase through the transfer IN of students with opposing characteristics may combine over time to diminish the academic diversity of the student population attending the selected district schools. Diminishing the socioeconomic and academic diversity of the student body would reduce a perceived strength of the district: student diversity. School planners will need to

consider this possible acceleration of an existing trend in the selected school district and other urban school districts as they project needs for particular services and programs and as they consider funding allocations. The relative reduction of students and parents who historically have been active participants in school activities and who hold high expectations for student performance could also have funding implications for the district. Such a change in students may make it more expensive to educate the students enrolled in the district's schools for historically more resources have been directed toward those students who have had the greatest difficulty succeeding in school. The selected school district may be losing to other districts through open enrollment the types of families who are better able to pay for higher taxes to maintain a strong public school system. Their continued support is essential to the future of the selected public school system. Specific efforts should be taken to maintain as district students the students from these families.

In this study the investigator surveyed parents who had made a school choice decision. A disproportionate share of the families who reside in

selected school district who sought a transfer for their children were middle or upper middle income families. Lower income selected district resident families appear to be underrepresented in the transfer requests studied. It seems unlikely that options for students through school choice would be perceived to be of less value to lower income parents than to those of higher income parents. This data suggests that if choice is intended for all families, then information must be made available about choice options to all parents. Therefore, schools should make systematic and targeted attempts to inform those parents who historically have had less access to traditional information sources about schools and school choice opportunities. Data on school programs, student behavior, attendance, graduation rates, and achievement, parent involvement opportunities, school goals, and other information about the schools and school system should be readily available to parents and others. Because of their socioeconomic status, some families have had school choice opportunities for years and have exercised those choices by selecting a residence near a school of their liking or enrolling in a private school. Without systematically providing

information to all parents, the schools may in effect be providing more choice to those parents who have already been able to exercise some school choice options.

#### Demographic Recommendations for Study

Since this study was conducted during one specified time period and in one community, it may only be descriptive of the particular setting at a particular time. The study should be replicated in the same setting and over time to compare findings with this study to determine if the implications discussed herein are applicable to this setting at different times.

Since only two students involved in this study were minority, the race of transfer students was not identified. Additional study should be made to determine to what degree, if any, open enrollment transfers of students IN and OUT of the selected school district will contribute to racial as well as socioeconomic segregation in the schools.

#### Research Question 2

What school selection factors influence parent school choice decisions?

### School Selection Factors Summary

Sixteen statements were read to the respondents. They were asked to state whether each statement was true or not true for both their neighborhood and requested schools.

As a total group, respondents projected a more positive view toward the neighborhood school than for the requested school for all statements but one. However, the difference between neighborhood and requested schools in the percentages of true and not true responses was not readily apparent for most statements. Percentage differences were quite noticeable, however, for some statements when respondents were grouped by transfer type and by involvement with child care. Parents who reported child care arrangements influenced their decision to request a school transfer viewed their neighborhood and requested schools differently than those parents who reported child care was not a factor in their transfer decision.

Parents with child care arrangements and seeking WITHIN transfers expressed a more positive view of the neighborhood school than of the requested school for each of the 16 statements. Respondents without child



care arrangements, however, gave the opposite view of the schools; a more positive perception of their requested school to all 16 statements.

Very apparent differences in the percentage of favorable responses were given to four statements, again with the neighborhood school viewed more positively by those with child care and the requested school viewed more positively by those without child care. The four statements which produced the greatest percentage difference between requested and neighborhood schools by WITHIN transfer group parents, according to whether or not there were child care arrangements, were the following: teachers are very good, there is not enough emphasis on the basics, teachers care about students, the school's reputation is not particularly good. The statement, the teaching of values is neglected, produced quite different responses for the neighborhood and requested schools only by those respondents without child care.

Unlike the WITHIN transfer group parents, the OUT parents with child care arrangements rated the requested school more favorably than the neighborhood school when responding to 13 of the 16 statements. The parents without child care reported more favorable

responses for the requested school for 5 statements.

These five statements follow:

- 7. the teaching of values is neglected
- 9. the school is not always clean
- 11. the school staff does not usually respond to  
parent and community concerns
- 12. parents of students in the school believe the  
principal will help resolve problems at the  
school
- 14. students in this school have many problems

A favorable view of the neighborhood school was most pronounced when OUT respondents without child care responded to the following statements:

- 4. there is sufficient staff racial diversity in  
this school
- 5. there are too many students in a class
- 6. not enough emphasis is placed on the teaching  
of the arts
- 15. there is not enough racial diversity in the  
student body

All but two of the IN transfer group respondents stated a child care arrangement was the reason for the transfer request. Responses to 8 of the 16 school selection statements by IN group respondents showed a

more favorable view of their neighborhood school than the requested school. Five statements yielded more favorable responses toward the requested school. Three statements provided the same percentage of favorable responses to both the neighborhood and requested schools. Two statements provided the most favorable view of the neighborhood school. These two statements related to the teaching of values and problem students in the school. The statements which elicited the most positive view of the requested school were related to the quality of teachers and class size.

When asked what the most important reason was for requesting a transfer, 48% of the WITHIN parents and 59% of the OUT transfer parents reported it was the school's instructional program. More than one-fourth of these parents without child care reported the most important reason was safety and discipline; while a higher percentage of those with child care named convenience than safety and discipline. Sixty-five percent of IN transfer parents reported convenience as the most important reason for the transfer.

There were no parents from any group who reported the instructional program was the least important reason for requesting the transfer. Convenience and

student diversity were the most often reported least important reasons for requesting the transfer.

School Selection Factors Conclusions  
and Discussion

The difference in perception of the neighborhood and requested schools by the WITHIN transfer group respondents was not unexpected. Those seeking transfers for child care reasons might generally be assumed to have different perceptions of the schools than those whose primary motivations for transferring were based on factors not related to child care. What was unexpected, however, was the total consistency with which those with child care arrangements favored their neighborhood school and those without child care favored their requested school.

The OUT transfer group respondents provided unexpected responses. Parents with child care arrangements from this transfer group viewed their requested school more favorably when responding to 13 of the 16 statements. Responses for one statement was the same for both schools, and the neighborhood school was favored in responses to only two statements. This expression of school preference was nearly the opposite

of that given by the WITHIN transfer group parents with child care arrangements.

The OUT transfer parents without child care reported more favorable responses for the neighborhood school for nine statements and for the requested school for five statements. Two statements elicited the same percentage of favorable responses for both schools. The five statements which produced a more favorable response for the requested school than for the neighborhood school were: the teaching of values is neglected, the school is not always clean, the school staff does not usually respond to parent and community concerns, parents of students in the school believe the principal will help resolve problems at the school, students in this school have many problems. Since these five statements were the only ones to produce more positive responses for the requested than for the neighborhood school, they should be studied carefully for they may relate to the issues which caused the parents to transfer their students to a school OUT of the selected district. Four statements elicited a more favorable view of the school in the selected school. These statements are: there are too many students in a class, there is sufficient staff

racial diversity in this school, there is not enough racial diversity in the student body, not enough emphasis is placed on the teaching of the arts. Since the above statements provided a more favorable response for the selected district school, it is unlikely issues related to these statements caused most parents to seek a transfer OUT of the district.

Nearly all IN district transfer group parents stated they requested the transfer for child care reasons. Respondents in this group favored their neighborhood school when responding to eight statements, their requested school to five statements, and three statements yielded the same percentage of favorable responses for both the neighborhood and requested schools. Parents in this group provided very high percentages of don't know responses to most statements for both schools.

Parents requesting WITHIN transfers because of child care arrangements reported knowing more about and having a more favorable view of their neighborhood school than of their requested school. School staff at the requested school could provide a valuable service to these parents by informing them about the requested school as soon as the transfer request is known.

School staff might consider a variety of strategies to provide information about the school to parents before students attend the school, including mailing school newsletters to the family and inviting families to general school activities and programs. Schools might also consider providing information about their school to area child care givers. Having students from the school perform (band, chorus, plays, etc.) at child care centers occasionally might help parents of children at the centers view the school more favorably.

Parents whose WITHIN transfer requests were not related to child care viewed the requested school more favorably than the neighborhood school. Staff in the neighborhood school should determine what information encouraged these parents to look more favorably toward the requested school and implement changes when appropriate to cause neighborhood schools to be viewed in a more favorable way.

Parents who requested OUT transfers and whose child care providers were located in the school district they requested their child be allowed to attend indicated a more favorable view of their requested school than of their neighborhood school. School staff should determine what sources of

information allowed parents to view the requested school more favorably than the neighborhood school. Plans should be developed to provide more information about the selected district schools to these parents. School staff should consider informing staff in child care centers in the general selected district area about the schools in the district. Also, information about schools might be provided to preschool centers and major employers. Inviting parents of two, three, and four year olds to visit the school and to school events, offering special programs to parents of preschoolers, such as library hours and parent child activity times, could be ways to provide important information to parents about schools at the times when parents are in the process of making school choice decisions.

School administrators, teachers, and other school staff should be helped to understand their role in a school choice, market driven school. Not only should they understand the importance of "selling" their program to parents, but they should be expected to possess the skills to successfully do so. Public schools have long been viewed by some as a monopolistic institution; schools simply opened their doors to get



students. Proponents of choice believe the elimination of the monopoly will increase competition for students which will result in better schools (Kolderie, 1988; Reitman, 1987; Lamm, 1986). School staffs need to understand that in a school-choice market driven school environment, the parents and students will take their business elsewhere, that is enroll in a school of their choice. The school district and individual schools should identify and implement strategies to continually detect and respond to parental concerns and satisfactions with the school.

Data collected in this study support the notion that parents will select a school they believe is a good one for their child, unless child care arrangements dictate otherwise. The location of a child care center and the transportation arrangements needed to get the child from the day care center to the school may for some families be issues which take precedence over all other considerations. The WITHIN transfer parents with child care arrangements reported favorable views of the neighborhood school, suggesting that if child care were not a factor their students would attend the neighborhood school. School staff

could influence parent perceptions of schools in such situations by working closely with child care centers.

Reports from national, state, and local business, political, and education leaders highlight the growing dissatisfaction with public education. Coleman, Hoffer and Kilgore (1981) indicate that the higher achievement among private school students was directly related to the fact that they attended schools with safe and orderly environments where expectations for academic achievement were high for all students. Data from this study suggest parents seeking OUT and WITHIN transfers may have been looking for such a setting for their child.

The need by parents from each group, and by the parents from the IN transfer group in particular, to arrange for child care may have been of overriding importance and may have taken precedence over all other considerations when selecting a school. Indeed, the WITHIN and IN transfer group parents with child care involvement generally reported a more favorable view of their neighborhood schools than the schools they requested.

One-half of the parents in this study requested a transfer for a student who was already attending

school. Also, one-half of the 22% of parents who reported they had a child older than the one for whom they were requesting a transfer reported the school experience of the older child influenced their decision to request a transfer for the younger child. The neighborhood school had an opportunity to directly influence these parents to keep their child in the school the parents should presumably know best. Therefore, schools should plan for systematic ways to provide information to parents of students already in the school. Information from the study would suggest that certain issues be addressed in the school's regular communication efforts throughout the year. Some of these issues include: evidence of teachers caring for students, efforts the school has made to respond to parent and community concerns, evidence that the teaching of values is not neglected.

#### School Selection Factors Recommendations for Study

Parents transferring their children OUT of the selected district generally gave a more favorable rating to the requested school than for the selected district neighborhood school when responding to five statements. These statements were: the teaching of

values is neglected, the school is not always clean, the school staff does not usually respond to parent and community concerns, parents of students in the school believe the principal will help resolve problems at the school, and students in this school have many problems. In addition, these parents reported the most important reason for requesting a transfer was related to the school's instructional program. More study is needed to determine such matters as what meaning parents attached to the word value, what types of concerns are not responded to by school staff and what specifically about a school's instructional program may cause parents to seek a transfer. Thorough study of these five statements could provide the District with information to determine how best to respond to students transferring to schools in other school districts.

An explanation is not available for why OUT transfer parents with child care viewed their requested school more favorably than their neighborhood school. Additional information should be collected from this group of parents to determine how they developed their perceptions of the schools. The perception of the school may reflect the perception they hold of the

general geographical area. Or possibly the child care providers helped the parents create a very positive view of the nearby suburban school. The selected school district needs to determine how the perceptions were formed so that effective strategies can be identified to develop more positive perceptions of the neighborhood school.

What are some of the long term results of choice is a question which should be studied. Proponents of choice argue that the competition for students in a market-driven school environment will improve schools and cause them to become more responsive to students and parents (Weber, 1986; Raywid, 1984; Levin, 1982). Questions to be answered include the following: (a) Do district schools become more responsive to parent and student needs under a choice system? (b) Does student performance improve in a choice school? (c) How satisfied are parents with their school choice decisions a year or two after making the school selection decision? (d) Are transfer parents more likely than other parents to request a transfer for their children again in the future, possibly when their students are to start middle or high school? (e) Will schools become more homogeneous in terms of

socioeconomic and academic achievement levels of students? (f) Will self-selection of schools cause school structure and governance to change?

This study examined public school choice decisions of parents of elementary students. Other studies should be designed to answer the question: Are the reasons for requesting transfers the same for parents who request transfers for students at the middle and high school levels?

Parents included in this study were those who had selected a non-neighborhood public school for their children. Parents who had not requested a transfer were not included. Why do some parents request a transfer and others do not? Is requesting a transfer based on an awareness of schooling alternatives and specific school programs or simply based on dissatisfaction or particular satisfaction with a particular school? Which occurs first in school choice behavior, dissatisfaction with a school or searching for a school to meet needs of a student and family? Future studies should seek to determine how much specific knowledge parents have about schooling options for their children.

This study attempted to determine which school selection variables from among some generally assumed variables were most important to parents when selecting one public school over another in an open enrollment school choice model. More studies based on in-depth, personal interviews to more specifically identify the reasons for selecting one public school over another are needed to provide more information on "why" parents select a particular school.

#### Research Question 3

For how long did parents consider asking for a school transfer before actually requesting one?

#### Time Spent Considering a Transfer Summary

The length of time spent thinking about requesting a transfer varied by transfer type and by whether or not there was a child care arrangement. Parents of students requesting a transfer to a school outside of the selected district were more likely to report they had spent a longer time thinking about seeking a transfer than other parents. Fifty-seven percent of WITHIN transfer respondents with child care reported spending six months or more thinking about requesting a transfer. One-half of the OUT transfer respondents,

with or without child care, reported considering a transfer for six months or more before requesting one. There were no IN transfer parents with child care who reported spending six months or more; however, this is not particularly surprising since IN transfer group parents reported having lived at their residences for a relatively short time at the time they completed their transfer application. Respondents who had lived at their residence for a year or longer were more likely to report spending a longer time thinking about asking for a transfer than those who had lived at their residence for less than a year. Parents who reported their child was academically above average were also more likely to state they had spent a longer time thinking about a transfer than those who had reported their student was academically average or below average.

#### Time Considering a Transfer Conclusions and Discussion

A number of parents applied for a transfer more than six months before the start of school when the transfer was to be effective and also reported thinking about asking for a transfer several months before actually requesting one. Schools need to develop



specific plans to provide information to parents according to the decision making time line suggested by the data collected in this study.

Many of the parents in this study requested transfers for students who were entering kindergarten. The data suggest schools should provide information to parents more than twelve months before the student is scheduled to begin kindergarten.

#### Time Considering a Transfer Recommendations for Study

Additional study should be undertaken to determine how parents, particularly parents of kindergarten students, get information about schools and how schools can provide useful information at times which are meaningful to parents.

Furthermore, additional study should determine if parents consider school selection when making child care arrangement decisions a year or more before a child is to enroll in kindergarten?

#### Summary

School choice creates competition for students since dollars to support students follow the student. In light of today's movement to a more market-driven

school, school leaders need to study how parents go about selecting a school for their child much as many businesses study the selection behavior of their customers. Schools will need to understand the reasons most important to parents for selecting a school for their child, the information parents use in learning about schools, how they get that information, when the information is most useful to parents in making school choice decisions, and whether parents who once make a school choice will likely select another school if certain conditions do or do not exist.

This study provides information which should prove useful to school leaders in the urban school districts. Information is provided for better understanding which parents are requesting transfers and why. The information should help to identify for school leaders to whom and when they need to communicate and what should be communicated about their schools. The data support the need for all school employees to recognize the importance of the way they carry out their jobs and how they relate to current and prospective parents of students in a market driven school. There is competition for students in the current school-choice

model and there will likely be increased competition for students as the choice model expands and becomes better known.

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## Appendix A

## PRESURVEY LETTER, SURVEY, AND QUESTIONNAIRE

Date

Dear

I am asking for your assistance with an important open enrollment research study. The study will focus on how parents and guardians of elementary school students choose a school for their children.

One of the important decisions parents and guardians make is deciding which elementary school their children will attend. For several years the Des Moines School District has provided school options for students through an open enrollment program. An Iowa law now makes open enrollment transfers available to students throughout the state. A few other states also have open enrollment laws; a number of others are considering such laws.

Although there is considerable interest in providing school choice options, little is known about how parents or guardians select a public school for their children. This study is designed to gather information about how parents and guardians select schools. Such information will be very valuable to those who will assist parents and guardians in making school enrollment decisions, as well as to those who are interested in improving schools.

In about a week, a telephone interviewer will call and ask that you answer some questions for this study. The interview will take approximately 7 to 10 minutes. All responses you provide will remain confidential. The group of parents and guardians selected for this study is small. Therefore, your participation is crucial to the success of the project.

The funding to support this study is from private sources. No tax money or Des Moines School money is being used to support this study; the cost of the envelope, paper and postage to send this letter was provided by private sources.

Please consider answering the questions of the telephone interviewer.

Sincerely,

Pat Moran  
Associate Director, Elementary /Early Childhood Programs

## TELEPHONE SURVEY

## School Choice

*Say to whomever answers the phone:*

Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am calling regarding a study concerning parents selecting an elementary school for their children. Recently a letter was sent to \_\_\_\_\_ concerning this study. May I speak with \_\_\_\_\_ please.

Complete only A or B

*A. If person requested answers, continue with:*

Recently you received a letter telling you about a telephone survey regarding parents' selecting an elementary school for their children.

This survey takes about 10 minutes to complete. Your answers will be treated confidentially. Is it OK if I ask you the survey questions now or should I call another time?

If call back:

What would be a good time for me to call you back?

Can I reach you at this same number?

*B. If the person requested does not originally answer the phone but is the second person to speak to you, state the following:*

Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_.

Recently you received a letter telling you about a telephone survey regarding parents' selecting an elementary school for their children. I am calling concerning this study.

This survey takes about 10 minutes to complete. Your answers will be treated confidentially. Is it OK if I ask you the survey questions now or should I call at another time?

If call back:

What would be a good time for me to call you back?

Can I reach you at this same number?

## TELEPHONE SURVEY QUESTIONS

I. What grade will your child be in when school starts next fall? (oldest elementary student parent is requesting a transfer for)

- ☐ Kdgn.
- ☐ 1st.
- ☐ 2nd.
- ☐ 3rd.
- ☐ 4th.
- ☐ 5th.

II. You applied for the transfer on -----. How long before applying did you begin to seriously think about asking for a transfer?

- ☐ one to four weeks before applying?
- ☐ one to six months before applying?
- ☐ six months or more before applying?

III. Who first thought of the idea of a transfer for your child?

- ☐ mother
- ☐ father
- ☐ grandparent
- ☐ the student
- ☐ another family member
- ☐ friend/neighbor
- ☐ other
- ☐ mother and father

For the next set of questions, I will use the terms "neighborhood school" and "requested school". Neighborhood school is the one your child is assigned to attend based on where you live. The requested school is the one you asked that your child be allowed to attend. Do you have any questions about which school is your neighborhood school and which is the requested school?

- ☐ yes
- ☐ no

IV. Did someone recommend to you the particular school you requested?

☐

yes

☐

friend or acquaintance

☐

relative

☐

employee of Des Moines Schools

☐

other

☐

no

V. Is your major interest to get your child in:

☐

the particular school you requested? or

☐

a school other than your neighborhood school?

VI. Did you request the transfer because of child care arrangements?

☐

yes

☐

no

VII. Which of the following statements do you believe are true about your Neighborhood School

True=1    Not True=2    Don't Know=0

☐

1. the teachers are very good

☐

2. student test scores are high

☐

3. not enough emphasis is placed on the teaching of basics

☐

4. there is sufficient staff racial diversity in this school

☐

5. there are too many students in a class

☐

6. not enough emphasis is placed on the teaching of the arts

☐

7. the teaching of values is neglected

☐

8. student discipline is good

☐

9. the school is not always clean

- ☐ 10. teachers care about students
- ☐ 11. the school staff does not usually respond to parent and community concerns
- ☐ 12. parents in the school believe the principal will help resolve problems at the school
- ☐ 13. students are interested in doing well in school
- ☐ 14. students in this school have many problems
- ☐ 15. there is not enough racial diversity in the student body
- ☐ 16. the school's reputation is not particularly good

VIII. Thank you for answering questions about your neighborhood school. Now I will ask a few questions about the school you requested. Please tell me which of the following statements you believe are true about your **Requested School**.

True=1                      Not True=2                      Don't Know=0

- ☐ 1. the teachers are very good
- ☐ 2. student test scores are high
- ☐ 3. not enough emphasis is placed on the teaching of basics
- ☐ 4. there is sufficient staff racial diversity in this school
- ☐ 5. there are too many students in a class
- ☐ 6. not enough emphasis is placed on the teaching of the arts
- ☐ 7. the teaching of values is neglected
- ☐ 8. student discipline is good
- ☐ 9. the school is not always clean
- ☐ 10. teachers care about students



- ☐ 11. the school staff does not usually respond to parent and community concerns
- ☐ 12. parents in the school believe the principal will help resolve problems at the school
- ☐ 13. students are interested in doing well in school
- ☐ 14. students in this school have many problems
- ☐ 15. there is not enough racial diversity in the student body
- ☐ 16. the school's reputation is not particularly good

IX. Is your Neighborhood School or your Requested School more conveniently located for you?

- ☐ neighborhood school
- ☐ requested school

X. Next, I will read a list of 5 possible reasons for selecting a school. Of these 5, please tell me which was the most important to you when you asked for the requested school.

(repeat sentence with least important)

(Interviewer, use these codes to record responses.)

Most=5

Least=1

- ☐ convenience
- ☐ diversity of student body
- ☐ facility and grounds
- ☐ instructional program
- ☐ safety and discipline

Finally, I have a few short questions to help classify the answers of people we are interviewing. Please understand that all of your responses will be treated confidentially.

XI. Do you have a child that is older than the one for whom you have requested a transfer?

☐

yes

If yes...Did the experiences your older child have in school influence your decision to apply for a transfer for this student?

☐

yes

☐

no

☐

no older child

XII. Which of the following age ranges best fits you?

☐

15-22

☐

23-28

☐

29-35

☐

36-42

☐

43-50

☐

over 50

XIII. How long have you lived at your present residence?

☐

less than 6 months

☐

6 to 12 months

☐

1 to 2 years

☐

more than two years

XIV. What do you believe is the academic level of your child?

☐

about average

☐

below average

☐

above average

XV. When you attended elementary school, did you attend the public school near your home?

- ☐ yes  
☐ no

XVI. What was the last grade in school you had an opportunity to complete?

- ☐ 7 or 8  
☐ 9 or 10  
☐ 11  
☐ 12  
☐ some post high school  
☐ college degree

XVII. Please stop me when I say the income range that most closely represents your total family income last year from all sources?

- ☐ less than \$10,000  
☐ \$10 to \$20,000  
☐ \$20 to \$30,000  
☐ \$30 to \$40,000  
☐ \$40, to \$50,000  
☐ over \$50,000

This concludes the survey. Thank you very much for your help. Your responses will be very important to the study. Do you have any questions? \_Thank you.  
\*\*\*STOP\*\*\*

**TO BE COMPLETED BY INTERVIEWER:**

Race of student \_\_\_\_\_

Name of interviewer \_\_\_\_\_

Date interview completed \_\_\_\_\_

Time interview began \_\_\_\_\_

Time interview ended \_\_\_\_\_

Within District transfer \_\_\_\_\_

Between District transfer \_\_\_\_\_

into Des Moines \_\_\_\_\_

out of Des Moines \_\_\_\_\_

Demographic Interview Questions

1. What grade will your child be in when school starts next fall?
2. Who first thought of the idea of a transfer for your child?
3. Did you request the transfer because of child care arrangements?
4. Is your neighborhood school or requested school more conveniently located for you?
5. Do you have a child that is older than the one for whom you have requested a transfer?
6. Which of the following age ranges best fits you?
7. How long have you lived at your present residence?
8. What do you believe is the academic level of your child?
9. When you attended elementary school, did you attend the public school near your home?
10. What was the last grade in school you completed?
11. Please stop me when I say the income range that most closely represents your total family income last year from all sources.

## Appendix B

### SUMMARY DATA

#### Comparison of Responses to Neighborhood and Requested Schools by Transfer Type (Request Because of Child Care Arrangements)

Question	<u>All</u>		<u>Within District</u>		<u>Out of District</u>		<u>Into District</u>	
	N %	R %	N %	R %	N %	R %	N %	R %
1. the teachers are very good...								
Don't Know	41.9%	42.5%	35%	56.7%	53.3%	46.7%	48.3%	34.5%
True	55.1%	53.3%	63.3%	38.3%	43.3%	53.3%	51.7%	62.1%
Not True	3%	4.2%	1.7%	5%	3.3%	0.0%	0.0%	3.4%
2. student test scores are high...								
Don't Know	65.3%	60.5%	68.3%	68.3%	73.3%	56.7%	72.4%	65.5%
True	25.7%	33.5%	30%	25%	26.7%	40%	27.6%	31%
Not True	3%	6%	1.7%	6.7%	0.0%	3.3%	0.0%	3.4%
3. not enough emphasis on the basics...								
Don't Know	55.1%	53.9%	50%	61.7%	60%	53.3%	65.5%	65.5%
True	6%	7.2%	5%	11.7%	16.7%	3.3%	0.0%	3.4%
Not True	38.9%	38.9%	45%	26.7%	23.3%	43.3%	34.5%	31%
4. there is sufficient staff racial diversity in this school...								
Don't Know	59.3%	64.7%	50%	66.7%	70%	66.7%	75.9%	75.9%
True	33.5%	29.9%	38.3%	28.3%	26.7%	23.3%	24.1%	20.7%
Not True	7.2%	5.4%	11.7%	5%	3.3%	10%	0.0%	3.4%
5. there are too many students in class...								
Don't Know	46.7%	50.9%	33.3%	53.3%	53.3%	46.7%	75.9%	68%
True	15.6%	14.4%	25%	20%	10%	0.0%	13.8%	10.3%
Not True	37.7%	34.7%	41.7%	26.7%	36.7%	53.3%	10.3%	20.7%
6. not enough emphasis on the arts...								
Don't Know	62.9%	66.5%	63.3%	76.7%	66.7%	63.3%	75.9%	72.4%
True	4.2%	4.2%	6.7%	1.7%	6.7%	3.3%	0.0%	3.4%
Not True	32.9%	29.3%	30%	21.7%	26.7%	33.3%	24.1%	24.1%
7. the teaching of values is neglected...								
Don't Know	46.1%	49.7%	43.3%	56.7%	46.7%	40%	69%	75.9%
True	7.2%	6.6%	8.3%	6.7%	6.7%	6.7%	0.0%	3.4%
Not True	46.7%	43.7%	48.3%	36.7%	46.7%	53.3%	31%	20.7%
8. student discipline is good...								
Don't Know	38.9%	41.9%	38.3%	50%	33.3%	26.7%	58.6%	58.6%
True	50.9%	47.3%	55%	45%	46.7%	56.7%	41.4%	37.9%
Not True	10.2%	10.8%	6.7%	5%	20%	16.7%	0.0%	3.4%

9. the school is not always clean...									
Don't Know	44.9%	48.5%	35%	51.7%	46.7%	50%	69%	72.4%	
True	7.2%	7.2%	6.7%	8.3%	10%	6.7%	3.4%	3.4%	
Not True	47.9%	44.3%	58.3%	40%	43.3%	43.3%	27.6%	24.1%	
10. teachers care about students...									
Don't Know	36.5%	39.5%	26.7%	41.7%	53.3%	43.3%	51.7%	44.8%	
True	58.7%	55.7%	66.7%	48.4%	43.3%	56.7%	48.3%	51.7%	
Not True	4.8%	4.8%	6.7%	8.3%	3.3%	0.0%	0.0%	3.4%	
11. the school staff doesn't respond to parent and community concerns...									
Don't Know	50.3%	54.5%	45%	58.3%	53.3%	46.7%	65.5%	65.5%	
True	4.8%	6%	5%	6.7%	6.7%	3.3%	0.0%	3.4%	
Not True	44.9%	39.5%	50%	35%	40%	50%	34.5%	31%	
12. parents believe that principal solves problems in school...									
Don't Know	53.9%	53.9%	46.7%	56.7%	60%	56.7%	65.5%	69%	
True	40.1%	40.7%	46.7%	38.3%	33.3%	40%	31%	24.1%	
Not True	6%	5.4%	6.7%	5%	6.7%	3.3%	3.4%	6.9%	
13. students are interested in doing well in school...									
Don't Know	43.7%	47.9%	33.3%	50%	53.3%	50%	65.5%	69%	
True	54.5%	48.5%	65%	43.3%	43.3%	50%	31%	31%	
Not True	1.8%	1.8%	1.7%	6.7%	3.3%	0.0%	3.4%	0.0%	
14. students in this school have many problems...									
Don't Know	58.7%	59.3%	56.7%	60%	60%	56.7%	69%	69%	
True	11.4%	10.8%	10%	11.7%	10%	3.3%	3.4%	13.8%	
Not True	29.9%	29.9%	33.3%	28.3%	30%	40%	27.6%	17.2%	
15. there is not enough racial diversity in student body...									
Don't Know	62.9%	64.7%	60%	65%	73.3%	70%	69%	65.5%	
True	6%	8.4%	8.3%	8.3%	6.7%	16.7%	3.4%	6.9%	
Not True	31.1%	26.9%	31.7%	26.7%	20%	13.3%	27.6%	27.6%	
16. the school's reputation is not particularly good...									
Don't Know	37.7%	32.9%	30%	36.7%	33.3%	30%	51.7%	44.8%	
True	10.2%	16.2%	10%	20%	20%	13.3%	6.9%	10.3%	
Not True	52.1%	50.9%	60%	43.3%	46.7%	56.7%	41.4%	44.8%	

Comparison of Responses to Neighborhood  
and Requested Schools by Transfer Type (No Request Because of Child Care Arrangements)

Question	All		Within District		Out of District		Into District	
	N %	R %	N %	R %	N %	R %	N %	R %
1. the teachers are very good...								
Don't Know	41.9%	42.5%	50%	31.3%	14.3%	14.3%	0.0%	100%
True	55.1%	53.3%	43.8%	59.4%	78.6%	78.6%	100%	0.0%
Not True	3%	4.2%	6.3%	9.4%	7.1%	7.1%	0.0%	0.0%
2. student test scores are high...								
Don't Know	65.3%	60.5%	62.5%	53.1%	35.7%	35.7%	0.0%	100%
True	25.7%	33.5%	25.0%	43.8%	64.3%	42.9%	100%	0.0%
Not True	3%	6%	12.5%	3.1%	0.0%	21.4%	0.0%	0.0%
3. not enough emphasis on the basics...								
Don't Know	55.1%	53.9%	65.6%	34.4%	28.6%	35.7%	0.0%	100%
True	6%	7.2%	6.3%	6.3%	0.0%	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Not True	38.9%	38.9%	28.1%	59.4%	71.4%	50%	100%	0.0%
4. there is sufficient staff racial diversity in this school...								
Don't Know	59.3%	64.7%	62.5%	50%	35.7%	57.1%	50%	100%
True	33.5%	29.9%	25%	43.8%	64.3%	35.7%	50%	0.0%
Not True	7.2%	5.4%	12.5%	6.3%	0.0%	7.1%	0.0%	0.0%
5. there are too many students in class...								
Don't Know	46.7%	50.9%	46.9%	34.4%	35.7%	35.7%	0.0%	100%
True	15.6%	14.4%	9.4%	9.4%	0.0%	42.9%	50%	0.0%
Not True	37.7%	34.7%	43.8%	56.3%	64.3%	21.4%	50%	0.0%
6. not enough emphasis on the arts...								
Don't Know	62.9%	66.5%	62.5%	46.9%	35.7%	64.3%	0.0%	100%
True	4.2%	4.2%	3.1%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Not True	32.9%	29.3%	34.4%	40.6%	64.3%	35.7%	100%	0.0%
7. the teaching of values is neglected...								
Don't Know	46.1%	49.7%	46.9%	28.1%	21.4%	14.3%	0.0%	100%
True	7.2%	6.6%	6.3%	6.3%	21.4%	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Not True	46.7%	43.7%	46.9%	65.6%	57.1%	71.4%	100%	0.0%
8. student discipline is good...								
Don't Know	38.9%	41.9%	46.9%	34.4%	0.0%	14.3%	0.0%	100%
True	50.9%	47.3%	43.8%	53.1%	71.4%	50%	100%	0.0%
Not True	10.2%	10.8%	9.4%	12.5%	28.6%	35.7%	0.0%	0.0%
9. the school is not always clean...								
Don't Know	44.9%	48.5%	46.9%	34.4%	28.6%	21.4%	0.0%	50%
True	7.2%	7.2%	9.4%	12.5%	7.1%	7.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Not True	47.9%	44.3%	43.8%	53.1%	64.3%	71.4%	100%	50%
10. teachers care about students...								
Don't Know	36.5%	39.5%	43.8%	31.3%	7.1%	21.4%	0.0%	50%
True	58.7%	55.7%	50%	65.6%	85.7%	71.4%	100%	50%
Not True	4.8%	4.8%	6.3%	3.1%	7.1%	7.1%	0.0%	0.0%



11. the school staff  
doesn't respond to  
parent and commun-  
ity concerns...

Don't Know	50.3%	54.5%	46.9%	43.8%	57.1%	42.9%	0.0%	100%
True	4.8%	6%	6.3%	6.3%	7.1%	7.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Not True	44.9%	39.5%	46.9%	50%	35.7%	50%	100%	0.0%

12. parents believe  
that principal solves  
problems in school...

Don't Know	53.9%	53.9%	53.1%	46.9%	57.1%	21.4%	0.0%	50%
True	40.1%	40.7%	40.6%	46.9%	35.7%	78.6%	100%	50%
Not True	6%	5.4%	6.3%	6.3%	7.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

13. students are  
interested in doing  
well in school...

Don't Know	43.7%	47.9%	46.9%	37.5%	21.4%	21.4%	0.0%	50%
True	54.5%	48.5%	53.1%	59.4%	78.6%	71.4%	100%	50%
Not True	1.8%	1.8%	0.0%	3.1%	0.0%	7.1%	0.0%	0.0%

14. students in this  
school have many  
problems...

Don't Know	58.7%	59.3%	53.1%	56.3%	57.1%	50%	0.0%	100%
True	11.4%	10.8%	21.9%	12.5%	14.3%	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Not True	29.9%	29.9%	25%	31.3%	28.6%	35.7%	100%	0.0%

15. there is not  
enough racial  
diversity in student  
body...

Don't Know	62.9%	64.7%	65.6%	56.3%	42.9%	64.3%	0.0%	100%
True	6%	8.4%	6.3%	3.1%	0.0%	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Not True	31.1%	26.9%	28.1%	40.6%	57.1%	21.4%	100%	0.0%

16. the school's  
reputation is not  
particularly good...

Don't Know	37.7%	32.9%	46.9%	28.1%	35.7%	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%
True	10.2%	16.2%	9.4%	9.4%	7.1%	21.4%	0.0%	50%
Not True	52.1%	50.9%	43.8%	62.5%	57.1%	64.3%	100%	50%

Comparison of Responses to Neighborhood  
and Requested Schools by Transfer Type

Question	<u>All</u>		<u>Within District</u>		<u>Out of District</u>		<u>Into District</u>	
	N %	R %	N %	R %	N %	R %	N %	R %
1. the teachers are very good...								
Don't Know	41.9%	42.5%	40.2%	48.9%	40.9%	34.1%	48.4%	35.5%
True	55.1%	53.3%	56.5%	45.7%	54.5%	63.6%	51.6%	61.3%
Not True	3%	4.2%	3.3%	5.4%	4.5%	2.3%	0.0%	3.2%
2. student test scores are high...								
Don't Know	65.3%	60.5%	66.3%	62%	61.4%	52.3%	67.7%	67.7%
True	25.7%	33.5%	28.3%	32.6%	38.6%	38.6%	32.3%	29%
Not True	3%	6%	5.4%	5.4%	0.0%	9.1%	0.0%	3.2%
3. not enough emphasis on the basics...								
Don't Know	55.1%	53.9%	55.4%	52.2%	50%	47.7%	61.3%	67.7%
True	6%	7.2%	5.4%	8.7%	11.4%	6.8%	0.0%	3.2%
Not True	38.9%	38.9%	39.1%	39.1%	38.6%	45.5%	38.7%	29%
4. there is sufficient staff racial diversity in this school...								
Don't Know	59.3%	64.7%	54.3%	60.9%	59.1%	63.6%	74.2%	77.4%
True	33.5%	29.9%	33.7%	34.8%	38.6%	27.3%	25.8%	19.4%
Not True	7.2%	5.4%	12%	4.3%	2.3%	9.1%	0.0%	3.2%
5. there are too many students in class...								
Don't Know	46.7%	50.9%	38%	47.8%	47.7%	43.2%	71%	71%
True	15.6%	14.4%	19.6%	15.2%	6.8%	15.9%	16.1%	9.7%
Not True	37.7%	34.7%	42.4%	37%	45.5%	40.9%	12.9%	19.4%
6. not enough emphasis on the arts...								
Don't Know	62.9%	66.5%	63%	65.2%	56.8%	63.6%	71%	74.2%
True	4.2%	4.2%	5.4%	5.4%	4.5%	2.3%	0.0%	3.2%
Not True	32.9%	29.3%	31.5%	29.3%	38.6%	34.1%	29%	22.6%
7. the teaching of values is neglected...								
Don't Know	46.1%	49.7%	44.6%	47.8%	36.4%	34.1%	64.5%	77.4%
True	7.2%	6.6%	7.6%	6.5%	11.4%	9.1%	0.0%	3.2%
Not True	46.7%	43.7%	47.8%	45.7%	52.3%	56.8%	35.5%	19.4%
8. student discipline is good...								
Don't Know	38.9%	41.9%	41%	44.6%	22.7%	22.7%	54.8%	61.3%
True	50.9%	47.3%	51%	47.8%	54.5%	54.5%	45.2%	35.5%
Not True	10.2%	10.8%	7.6%	7.6%	22.7%	22.7%	0.0%	3.2%
9. the school is not always clean...								
Don't Know	44.9%	48.5%	39%	45.7%	43.2%	38.6%	64.5%	71%
True	7.2%	7.2%	7.6%	9.8%	9.1%	4.5%	3.2%	3.2%
Not True	47.9%	44.3%	53.3%	44.6%	47.7%	56.8%	32.3%	25.8%
10. teachers care about students...								
Don't Know	36.5%	39.5%	32.6%	38%	36.4%	38.6%	48.4%	45.2%
True	58.7%	55.7%	60.9%	55.4%	59.1%	59.1%	51.6%	51.6%
Not True	4.8%	4.8%	6.5%	6.5%	4.5%	2.3%	0.0%	3.2%

11. the school staff  
doesn't respond to  
parent and commun-  
ity concerns...

Don't Know	50.3%	54.5%	45.7%	53.3%	52.3%	47.7%	61.3%	67.7%
True	4.8%	6%	5.4%	6.5%	6.8%	6.8%	0.0%	3.2%
Not True	44.9%	39.5%	48.9%	40.2%	40.9%	45.5%	38.7%	29%

12. parents believe  
that principal solves  
problems in school...

Don't Know	53.9%	53.9%	48.9%	53.3%	59.1%	45.5%	61.3%	67.7%
True	40.1%	40.7%	44.6%	41.3%	34.1%	50%	35.5%	25.8%
Not True	6%	5.4%	6.5%	5.4%	6.8%	4.5%	3.2%	6.5%

13. students are  
interested in doing  
well in school...

Don't Know	43.7%	47.9%	38%	44.6%	43.2%	40.9%	61.3%	67.7%
True	54.5%	48.5%	60.9%	50%	54.5%	56.8%	35.5%	32.3%
Not True	1.8%	1.8%	1.1%	2.2%	2.3%	2.3%	3.2%	0.0%

14. students in this  
school have many  
problems...

Don't Know	58.7%	59.3%	55.4%	58.7%	61.4%	52.3%	64.5%	71%
True	11.4%	10.8%	14.1%	10.9%	11.4%	9.1%	3.2%	12.9%
Not True	29.9%	29.9%	30.4%	30.4%	27.3%	38.6%	32.3%	16.1%

15. there is not  
enough racial  
diversity in student  
body...

Don't Know	62.9%	64.7%	62%	62%	63.6%	68.2%	64.5%	67.7%
True	6%	8.4%	7.6%	6.5%	4.5%	13.6%	3.2%	6.5%
Not True	31.1%	26.9%	30.4%	31.5%	31.8%	18.2%	32.3%	25.8%

16. the school's  
reputation is not  
particularly good...

Don't Know	37.7%	32.9%	35.9%	37.7%	34.1%	25%	48.4%	41.9%
True	10.2%	16.2%	9.8%	16.3%	13.6%	18.2%	6.5%	12.9%
Not True	52.1%	50.9%	54.3%	50%	52.3%	56.8%	45.2%	45.2%